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D I A R Y
OF AN
IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

BY
FRANCES ELLIOT,
AUTHOR OF "PICTURES OF OLD ROME."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1872.

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“Mrs. Elliot knows Italy and the Italians as few English-women know or have known them. Her book is written as few women could write it.”


From THE TIMES.

TO MY HUSBAND,
THE DEAN OF BRISTOL,

This Book

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WHEN I call these volumes "The Diary of an Idle Woman," I do so because I went to Italy with a perfectly disengaged mind, with no special objects of inquiry, no definite call or profession, no pre-conceived theories. I was idle in that I went where fancy or accident led me; otherwise I hope my readers will not consider me "an idle woman."

It may be well to mention that some of these chapters (now almost entirely re-written) have appeared from time to time in some of the leading periodicals.

PREFACE.

The writer avails herself of the occasion given her by a new edition of the *Idle Woman in Italy*, to reply to some criticisms on her work.

Some critics who did her the favour to review her book, expressed strong opinions on her supposed inaccuracy, in having stated that at the gladiatorial games in the circus, *the raising of the thumb was the signal of life*.

Now this is in fact a vexed question, discussed in many learned tomes, and never yet finally settled. The writer having re-examined the classic authorities, considered, and does still consider, her statement to be correct. Those curious in the matter can consult Juvenal and Pliny, and also can enjoy the benefit of the whole discussion by examining the Treatise on Chironomania, by Gilbert Austen.

It is a significant fact, and confirmatory of the author's view, that the tradition, handed down

direct from the Romans, in their gladiatorial games in Spain still existing in the bull-fights (the modern substitute for the exhibitions of the circus), makes the *thumb turned up* the signal of life to the bull; the *thumb turned down*, death.

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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

A Mediæval City—The Sienese—The Piazza—The Palio.

I AM at Siena, on my way to Rome, enjoying those idle days when one learns so much. I arrived by the railway from Florence, which, as if ashamed, folds itself up in a deep valley, and is almost invisible. How it ever got to Siena at all I hardly know. It is the one single mark the present century has been permitted to make there, and that only by way of visiting-card, well outside the gates—otherwise we are entirely in the middle ages; our last news, what dress Bianca Capello wore at the Florence ball, how insolent she was, and how angry the Grand Duchess Johanna looked; or the probable marriage of Marie de Medici with Henri Quatre, if the Pope will allow the divorce from Queen Margot. Indeed, it seems but a few years ago since Charles V.

presented a fine portrait of himself by Holbein, as a legacy to the Sienese citizens. Cæsar Borgia, too, in his slashed velvet suit and fine Mechlin ruffles, how he swaggered about the Piazza, and in and out of the Palazzo Pubblico, ogling every pretty woman he saw—only he saw but few; for the Sienese all shut themselves up while he stayed, being alarmed by the fate of poor Ginevra, who was assassinated because she would not give up her lover, Ettore Fieramosca, to please him. Low enough now he lies, as well as his shameless old father—both gone to give account to the Archangel Gabriel of the poisons they concocted and the Romans they killed!

There stands the stout old city which I know so well, unchanged since I first beheld it more years ago than I choose to own—unchanged since the days of the Triumvirate—crowning a precipitous hill, or rather, many hills; the grand old walls, baked golden yellow by the suns of many centuries, running obstinately up hill and down dale, broken here and there by a cypress wood, or a huge church jutting out on a high promontory, or a castle with quaint towers, mullions, buttresses, and battlements along the sky-line. Always in the middle ages, we ignore the existence of gunpowder as a gross affront to our

understandings, and deem these walls impregnable.

Darkening the walls at intervals by deep shadows, rise lofty machicolated gates flanked by turrets, giant Cerberuses keeping watch, hostile and grim outwardly, but lit up within by richest frescoes of virgins and saints and angels, so that all who leave the city can see them hovering aloft, and say their passing *Ave*, and return thanks for having been preserved from falling headlong down those steep and dreadful *sdrucchioli* (slides), which descend from the main streets into the bowels of the city with a precipitousness perfectly astounding to the constructive sense.

You may enter Siena if you please by the Camollia Gate, where quite the other day the sons of Remus came riding up in an easy way from Rome, on finding that their uncle Romulus, though ostensibly remarkably civil, was planning for them an immediate descent into the Tartarean fields to join their father.

The very conversation which roused the suspicions of these ingenuous youths is related in an old chronicle, together with all other particulars of their arrival at Siena; also telling how this same gate came to be called Camollia from their tutor Camillus, and how they lived and died here,

setting up the wolf of the Capitol as their badge at the corners of the street, as may be seen still to this day.

Once past the gates, be the time day or night, hottest midday or wildest tramontana wind, the lofty cavernous streets engulf you. Every second building is a grim Gothic palace, with great shelving roof, solid rustic basement, much rich tracing and delicate handling about the arched windows and cornices, and wearing withal a certain *noli me tangere* look that even now keeps the citizen in his place, and teaches him how God, at the beginning, created noble and vile, and divided the ark accordingly.

Nearly all the historic families of Rome, including the fugitive sons of Remus, trace the family cradle to Siena; and as each great family is "*blessed*," as the word is, by one or more popes, who enriched his kindred from the pennies of St. Peter, we have here splendid palaces of the Borghese, Chigi, Farnese, Orsini, and Piccolomini. The churches, with the cathedral (that noble extravagance in marble) at the head of the list, would fill a volume; not forgetting the great fountains sung by Dante, and the pictures representing the most mystic of the mediæval schools. But

enough: we will descend into the Piazza, the throbbing heart of the living city.

Here we are in the midst of the republic of the middle ages. "Here," says Dante, "is the great field where men live gloriously free, Siena's Square," scorning alike Guelph or Ghibelline, Pope or Kaiser; indignantly rejecting the Countess Matilda, her money and her troops; brutal to the Emperor Charles IV., who, coming here as the protector or tyrant of the Medici type, was torn by the outraged citizens bodily out of his palace, dragged into this square, placed in the centre, and (every aperture, door, and street being carefully blockaded by troops) left there alone until hunger and cold brought down his imperial stomach, and he was fain to run from group to group entreating to be let out—entreating, however, in vain, until he promised to leave the city. Sure never was anointed emperor so treated!

Neither did the Sienese long suffer the Spaniards under Charles V. Things were made so uncomfortable to this emperor that he could not stay. Against Cæsar Borgia, too, they set up their backs. But times changed at last, when that traitor Pandolfo Petruccio, born of their own blood, sternly bridled them and broke their spirit, so that when the Marquis Marignano came with his great army,

sent by the Medici Grand Dukes, they were beaten and forced to bend their necks to the Florentine yoke.

This Piazza, shaped like a bow one thousand feet round, is a perfect picture of a republican forum, where forty thousand men can stand at ease, and every man be seen and heard. On the short side of the bow is the public palace, an architectural episode of the thirteenth century, once red, now mellowed to a tawny grey, with stone cornice, quaint turrets, and fantastic gargoyles; while in the midst rises that lovely tower (*della Mangia*), tall and taper, crowned with a circlet of whitest stone. In and out, flocks of grey pigeons circle round and round, finding a home in those rich carvings, or beneath the old clock that looks out like an eye in the centre.

Round the Piazza stretches a fringe of feudal palaces; while overhead, above the roofs, rise the cathedral dome and graceful campanile in stripes of black and white marble, those stripes being the arms of the city along with the wolf and cubs.

In these days now passing, the Piazza has assumed the appearance of a Roman circus, and is lined with raised benches up to the first floors of the palaces, save on one side where the ground descends and mattresses cover the walls. It is the

race of the *Palio*—games held annually, and identified from the earliest times with Siena.

During the Spanish rule they saw fit to alter the old fashion of the chariot-race, and inaugurated bull-fights; then the bull-fights lapsed into buffalo-fights, and finally settled down to what we are now about to see—horse-races.

The city, from the earliest days, has been divided into *contrade*, or parishes. Each *contrada* has its special church, generally of great antiquity, and each *contrada* is named after some animal or natural object, these names being symbolical of certain trades or customs.

There is the wolf, giraffe, owl, snail, tower, wave, goose, tortoise—in all seventeen. Each has its colours, heralds, pages, music, flags, all the mediæval paraphernalia of republican subdivision.

Moreover, each of these *contrade* is capable of committing forgery, murder, parricide, or any other atrocity, for the honour of its name and members. The close streets are really dangerous to traverse at this time. Each party pulls out its dagger, drinks, swaggers, swears, and fights on its own ground, and is ready to murder any one of an opposite faction with all the ferocity of belligerent states. To be the citizens of a common

city is *nothing* unless you belong to the same *contrada*. French and English in the good old days were not more savagely opposed. Perhaps no city in Europe has preserved so unchanged these mediæval feuds and customs.

An offence was lately given by "the Wave" to "the Tower." The Tower swore to have their blood, and a band of *giovanotti* came up out of a dark *sdrucchiolo* (slide) descending from the Palazzo Pubblico, in order to hang about in ambush at the mouth of another dark and filthy alley; ready, should a "Wave" surge up on the common shore of the Piazza, to strike it down then and there.

Poor Count Tolomei, the *sindaco* (mayor), a courtly noble, gentle to a fault, presents at these seasons the appearance of an ill-used man, who has neither slept nor eaten from excess of care. He shrugs his shoulders and casts up his eyes in pantomimic horror of the life he leads by reason of the murderous scum, who are so vicious that no police or military cares to follow them into their holes and dens, where they would rather prefer, on the whole, to cut a man's throat.

Each *contrada* runs a horse at the *Palio*, ridden by a *fantino* wearing the colours of the parish; and this horse and this *fantino* are the incarnation of the honour and glory, evil and good pas-

sions, of its *contrada*. The enthusiasm is frantic, and the betting desperate.

This is Wednesday, the 16th August, and we are glad it is come, for there have been rehearsals for four days, twice every day, and the din has been deafening. According to custom, flags have been tossed each day as high as the upper windows, in a kind of quaint dance or triumph, very gracefully executed by the pages of the *contrade*. Then, too, are drums beaten and trumpets sounded within each palace *cortile*, to remind the noble marquis or my lord count—each of whom is “protector” of some *contrade*—that the *Palio* is at hand, and to intimate that a little ready cash will be joyfully received for the purchase of a swift and likely horse (an intimation the noble in question is very careful to comply with, if he desires to live peaceably at Siena).

We are awakened to-day by the great bell of the Mangia tower and a complication of military music, approaching as nearly as possible to the confusion of Babel. Later come huge bouquets, borne by four pages in full mediæval costume of rich satin, wearing plumed hats, and accompanied by drums. These bouquets are sent as acknowledgments to those nobles who have contributed to the *Palio*. The more popular the man, the

larger and choicer the bouquet, which is always accepted with much ceremony.

At six o'clock, when the broiling August sun had somewhat worn itself out, a large company assembled on the great stone balcony of the Chigi Palace, every window on the immense façade being decorated with magnificent red and yellow damask. All round the Piazza these gay trappings marked the lines of the windows, where in each feudal palace stood the living representatives of many historic names.

An enormous crowd, some thirty thousand in number, gradually fills the Piazza, chattering, quarrelling, laughing, screaming. Every seat in the raised amphitheatre is soon taken; and the palace walls are lined as it were with humanity half-way up.

Opposite, there are the noble youths of the Siena College—the Italian Oxford—in full evening dress; and the *séminaristes* (baby-priests), in blue and red *sottane*. In the centre of the Piazza there is a perfect field of Leghorn hats as big as carriage-wheels, and crops of common fans; for fans are carried by every single female down to mites of two years old, who successfully perform all accepted gyrations, and create a flutter as of ebbing waters. Bands of music break in from

time to time with soul-stirring tunes, such as "Garibaldi's Hymn" and "Out of Italy the Stranger." The rumbling of the drums in the different *contrade* sounds in the alleys and side streets, calling together the riders and the procession. The gendarmes are mounted on fat old horses, which, being greatly tormented by the flies, kick and plunge viciously, and send their hoofs into the very faces of the staring populace. Gently and very slowly, with that courtesy natural to Tuscans, these gendarmes "clear the course;" the people gathering, like a flock of sheep, thicker and thicker into the centre. "Clear the course!"—do you understand this, gentle reader? Do you understand that the stones of the Piazza, the granite *lastrì*, are "the *course*?" Oh, ye grassy slopes of Ascot and of Derby, green with short clovery turf, cool fragrant carpets embroidered with the early daisy and fragrant violet, and many a gay buttercup and flaunting dandelion, figure to yourselves, in your luxuriant spring mantle, the hard smooth stones of this iron pavement! Why, look! there are two corners at the bend of the bow with lamp-posts, sharp as any dagger in the lowest *contrada*. There is another beyond just where they are to start, under the Delci Palace; past this, a slippery level; then another

corner, and a rapid descent. Sure, never was such a murderous course! Sure none but mediæval blockheads, going on the father-to-son principle, would risk their necks on such a suicidal venture—to say nothing of the poor little horses, dragged from the oozy soil of the forest-covered Maremma to break their slight legs on such a *carrousel*!

Great excitement! The gendarmes, whose courtesy has been abused by some ill-educated roughs, sternly insist, with steadily-serried advance of six deep, on clearing the fatal course. Sienese notables at the club, rank and fashion in the palace balconies, are putting up opera-glasses and lorgnettes, and condescending to be amused. The little priests and the noble undergraduates, quite forgetting themselves, are evidently reprimanded sharply. Bells ring incessantly—the great Mangia bell, the audibly beating heart of the city, in long single strokes. The thirty thousand people become impatient; and the hoary palace and the big clock, its nether eye well turned on, keep ward over all. A cannon sounds, and from the Via Casato slowly emerges the procession—the first act in this new-old racing-card. The “Wave” *contrada* comes first—four flag-bearers and four pages in middle-age costume, red and white, the

flag-bearers performing as they advance the *gioco* (game) of the flags; quaint and graceful movements, such as you may see figured in Monstrelet; the *fantino*, or jockey, on an unsaddled horse; the racer, on which he is to ride by-and-by following, led by a page; in all ten different attendants for each *contrada*. The *fantino* always wears a striped surcoat, of the two colours of his *contrada*, with its symbolic image embroidered on his back in gold. Last of all comes the *carrocciolo*, embodying the visible republic, that formerly accompanied the troops to battle, and which, if taken or damaged, caused a terrible reproach and shame, such as the death of a great sovereign would now occasion. It is to our cynical eyes but a lumbering old cart, square and awkward, on which are grouped the flags of all the *contrade* in a fraternal union that never exists elsewhere.

Military bands and soldiers follow, exciting the populace to madness, who frantically clap their hands. All these *dramatis personæ*, including the *carrocciolo*, group themselves on an estrade in front of the public palace, and dispose themselves leisurely for enjoyment.

If darkness can be felt, surely silence may, and we all *felt* the pause when every man and every woman drew their breath. Again the can-

non thunders, and gaily trotting out from under the dark palace gateway, fifteen little horses with fifteen party-coloured riders appear, and place themselves before a rope stretched across the course—a very necessary precaution, I assure you, for last year the horses pressed against and broke the cord with their chests (and a strong cord too), and floored five men and three horses dead in a heap on the stones.

Now they are marshalled at the rope by a middle-aged gentleman in full evening dress—a queer contrast to the mediæval jockeys. He shows extraordinary courage in placing the horses and dragooning the riders. He gives the signal like children—*uno, due, trè, e via!*—drops his official staff, and jumps aside with what speed he can for the dear life. They are off like the wind, round the first corner, on to the murderous lamp-post, down the descent—whish! See, that horse has hugged the corner, rushed down the hill, and is safe. But here, look! this second rider is hurled off against the mattresses lining the house-walls at the fatal corner, or his brains would have been infallibly dashed out on the pavement. He falls, but thanks to this protection, is up again, bewildered, but still holding the reins, and so jumps into the saddle, and rides away. Two others just

escape; and two provoking horses won't run. Many are thrown; one horse bolts up a street. Three times they rush round the Piazza, at a risk and with a speed horrible to behold; and each time the ranks are thinner. They ride well, but against all rule, for they belabour each other's heads as much as their horses' sides—very uneducated and mediæval jockeys! Down hill—up again—helter-skelter—horses without riders racing also for the fun! The drum sounds, and it is all over, and the Oca (the goose) has won; and every one knew the Oca would win, because it was the best horse; and a howl, a shriek of exultation, comes up from the crowd, which separates and opens like the bursting of a dammed-up river.

Then the Oca horse is seized by, at the very least, thirty men and boys, and the *fantino* by as many more, who lift him from his unsaddled horse; and he and the horse are kissed, and hugged, and patted, and rejoiced over, and led, then and there, to the chapel at the bottom of the Mangia tower, where the Madonna stands on the altar, in a forest of flowers, uncovered in honour of the day. And so, surging up and down among the crowd, man and horse disappear down an alley, to reappear at the church of their own *contrada*, where the priest receives and blesses

them both, man and beast, and will hang up the *palio* (or banner) in the sacristy, with the date in gold letters, as a *cosa di devozione*.

For many nights, for many weeks, will all the "Goose" tribe eat, drink, and be merry, defying those who betted against them in very awful oaths, down in low narrow slums in the worst part of Siena, among the tanners, under San Dominic's Church, near the Fontebranda sung by Dante. Close by here stands the house of Santa Caterina, whose father was a tanner, and lived beside the fountain to moisten his hides. And Santa Caterina, all angelic as she was, would have rejoiced too at this victory of her *contrada*, for the glory of the *Palio* is dear to the heart of every Sienese.

CHAPTER II.

From Siena to Orvieto—Cathedral—Chiusi—Etruscan Tombs.

WE leave Siena for two days by the incongruous rail, and plunge into the clay hills lying southward—magnified ant-hills massed one upon the other, without shrub or herb to break the monotony of the grey earth, which is here wrinkled and tormented by countless water-courses. Nature in the South seldom exhibits herself in such repulsive forms.

This hilly desert belting Siena forms the border-land between idyllic Tuscany and Central Italy—Tuscany, with its laughing campagnas, rich with fat mulberries and trellised vines heavy with purple clusters, where bright home-like villas and evergreen groves, well-to-do *podere* (farms), churches, and convents crown each dimpling hill, and dot the sides of distant Apennines in all the confidence of perfect security—Central Italy, with its high, abrupt mountains, stern and repellent, scored with basaltic chasms, and traversed by vast

forests of living oak—sad lonely woods, home of the wild boar or savage swine. Here treeless, dried-up river-beds divide the valleys, and disappear into reedy lakes, without a vestige of human habitation, so marking the presence of malaria. Every town and city stands high up on rock or mountain—natural fortresses, where no straggling dwellings dare to linger outside the lofty walls. A land of grand, yet awful beauty, suggestive of all that is abrupt, sudden, wonderful; here an Etruscan city; there a cathedral glittering like a gem; yonder a lake mirroring itself in the fierce sunshine, deep buried in silent woods.

All this time our train has been moving. Here is Asinalunga, where Garibaldi was arrested after Mentana. At Siena no one dared to touch him—he was worshipped; but in this lonely town, tracked by Government spies, he was taken by order of that king to whom he had given Naples. Nothing succeeds like success. Garibaldi failed, and the greatest of modern heroes is banished.

There is necessarily a certain monotony common to railroads; but after passing Torrita the scenery through the valley of the Chiana becomes too grandly savage to be suppressed.

The towns named as the respective stations

are miles distant, each crowning its own familiar height. Mountain masses on mountain. To the left there is a mountain-chain that on its further side borders the Lake of Thrasymene; yonder lie the mountains of Viterbo; to our right are rugged isolated peaks, each bearing a ruined castle, convent, or village, dignified by historic names and lofty position—all majestic, but repulsive.

There, aloft, is Monte Pulciano, on whose sloping terraces grow those grapes (*manna*, as they are called) producing the “king of all wines.” Below lies the fair lake, called the Mirror of Monte Pulciano; its desolate flag-bordered shores the home of countless wild fowl, which, aroused by the railway-whistle, circle terrified over its surface.

Here is the Chiusi station, whither we shall by-and-by return. Opposite is Citta della Pieve, a cheerful little town, raising itself out of the unhealthy vapours on an oak-covered hill, the birth-place of Perugino. And now we stop by a bridge far too large for the shrunken river Arbia, which runs beneath. The doors are opened and the guard shouts “Orvieto!”

A huge station, a precipitous mountain, and an omnibus—such is the terminus of Orvieto.

The line is to be eventually carried on to Rome by Rieti, if Italy escapes bankruptcy.

In many weary zigzags the road ascends a perpendicular rock, and we come to understand why the popes of the middle ages fled to Orvieto when pressed by enemies. That poor beaten Medici, Clement VII., for instance, was glad enough to hide his head behind the strong walls we were approaching, after the sack of Rome by that awful sinner the Constable Bourbon.

On a high plateau surrounded by steep precipices, and protected by walls so solid they might be Etruscan, Pelasgic, and Roman all in one—flanked by a ruined fortress within which a band was playing "*Giulia gentil*" to some *saltimbanques* who had set up their nomad tents there, and were riding bare-backed horses and jumping hoops before a ragged crowd—stands Orvieto. Sad groves of olives wave over its walls, and ruins cumber lonely paths along the margin of its rocks.

A dirtier, uglier, more ill-conditioned place than this once Papal city of refuge it would be hard to find. A squalid, insolent population lounge about the narrow streets; here and there a grim old palace tells a tale of former grandeur,

as does the small piazza bearing a certain architectural prestige of the *cinque-cento*.

The inn "of the fine arts" (of course a broken-down palazzo) presents the worst specimen of *osteria*—vast, gloomy, cavernous; a great well in the middle of the cloistered court, dismal stairs, dirty waiters, rooms without doors, yet smelling as if always shut up, discomfort and squalor everywhere.

But is there not the cathedral, like a jewel in an Ethiop's ear, only one street off, and shall we despond?

On the highest part of the city is a square, from which all other buildings reverently recede. If it be not irreverent to liken a cathedral to a fairy palace, I would dare to do it. Of form so wonderful, of size so vast, of proportions so exquisite, in colour so indescribably brilliant, as the sun plays a thousand antics with its fantastic sculptures and glowing mosaics, until they glitter like a kaleidoscope—who can describe it?

Is it not fitter for Titania, or Undine, or Armida, for Kobold, or genius, or enchanter, than for a shrine? Is it an enchanted palace? or a marvellously-wrought casket for some spiritualised Glumdalclitch? or a casket for Cyclopean gems, worked in marble and alabaster, and adorned

with golden mosaics, a glory of sunshine all around? That wheel window in the centre, above those exquisite sculptures, is surely of finest lace, a thing altogether wrought by fairies, and set there to make earthly artists despair. Books may describe as Italian-Gothic (much more Italian than Gothic) the exquisite façade, broken by three vast portals, delicately wrought in finest alabaster, the spiral columns, the rich profusion of cornice, buttress, points, pinnacles, gargoyles, statues—but I persist in looking upon the whole as a sublime enchantment, a thing made out of the sunbeams, that may disappear in a moment at a wave of the magician's wand.

On entering, one is brought up suddenly in face of a prosaic reality of marble and stone (no delusion here), in alternate stripes of black and white, similar to the cathedrals of Siena, Lucca, and Pisa. The proportions are fine, but there is no mystery of dimly-lighted, "long-drawn aisles" faintly receding in the pale flutterings of chequered shadows. The lancet windows are full of sun, and the bare rafters of the wooden roof are visible in all their unseemly homeliness. The style of art is decidedly realistic. There is a pervading sense of the infernal rather than the celestial regions, which amounts to a positive odour of

brimstone. This decided tendency to the "terrors of the Lord" is strangely discrepant with the joyous spirit of the façade, which is much more pagan than Christian.

At the high-altar are two statues, by Mosca, that defy all the canons of art. Sculpture wrought in a material so grave as marble ought, it is taught, to be calm, if not monumental, and to portray no sudden or accidental attitude. Here we have a semi-heroic virgin, with a girlish face, probably a portrait; her long hair combed back from an open brow, her form shrouded in ample draperies—starting from her chair with a look of terror that is intensely natural. It is not in the least like a Madonna, "blessed among women;" but a girl alarmed, offended, defiant, fearing attack and meditating defence. Before her kneels the Archangel Gabriel, whose wings twist above his head like a serpent.

The Madonna Chapel to the right, covered with frescoes by Luca Signorelli, Fra Angelico, and Benozzo-Gozzoli, is a paradise for artists. From hence Michel Angelo has boldly transferred some of the finest figures bodily to his great fresco in the Sistine Chapel, especially a majestic Christ in judgment, with arms extended to bless

or to curse a prostrate universe. In those days such plagiarisms could be effected.

Old Gozzoli is as careless of form and grotesque in accessories as usual, with that same brilliant and glowing brush (as though the paint were still wet) which we remember at Pisa. Luca Signorelli revels as ever in wildest groups of demons, earthquakes, ruin, fire, fury, and violently foreshortened figures, powerful and astonishing, but so hideous as to shock the artistic sense, like music without melody. There is a haunting sense of study in these forced and tormented attitudes, a consciousness of anatomical torture, without repose or any sense of grace, common both to the copied and the copier. Both Michel Angelo and Signorelli loved elaborate displays of academic skill rather than that crowning triumph of all true art—beauty.

The reality was worse than the appearance as regarded the new school of "fine arts," to which we now directed our attention, for the food at our inn was atrocious, and the prices were high. We were astir by four o'clock A.M., having been made aware of what had often before painfully forced itself on our attention, viz., that an ironmonger and a blacksmith, of extraordinarily industrious habits, invariably reside in close con-

tiguity to all Italian inns, and that cunningly-devised associations exist throughout Italy expressly for the purpose of "murdering sleep." Much eloquent matter remains still unsaid as to the abnormal idiosyncrasies of small Italian towns, and the intense sufferings endured by the innocent and fatigued traveller, who goes to rest under the pleasing delusion that night is dedicated to silence and repose. At six o'clock we were at Chiusi.

We confided ourselves to the care of a small *vetturino* aged ten, proprietor of a tumble-down, dust-covered cabriolet, so antique that it might have carried Sterne.

The boy was furnished with a large pipe, at which he puffed away furiously. Asked how recently he had paid tribute to such early debaucheries, he laughed scornfully and replied, "he had smoked for many years." He professed to know the tombs and the roads, and cracking his whip over the most sluggish and placable of ill-fed ponies, cocked his hat and rattled out of the station.

On a rounded hill a mile off, in the midst of other softly-dimpling hills waving with olives, lies Chiusi, on what was the site of Clusium, the an-

cient city, the ally of Tarquin in the days when Lucretia spun.

As we ascend, the hills take strange fantastic shapes, suggestive of *tumuli*; we pass sepulchral portals shaded by cypresses and hewn in the tufa—everything is subterraneous and uncanny. After many efforts on the part of our boy, ill seconded by the stagnant disposition of his horse, we reach a small *locanda*, the “Golden Lion,” outside the walls, where children unwashed from their birth, big pigs, dogs, a grinning idiot crawling on all fours, several horribly-afflicted beggars, and a general background of idlers of that gentlemanly class “who have nothing to do,” assemble to meet us. A landlady, fresh from her bed, wearing only a pair of stays and a thin petticoat, her hair as Nature pleases, her face smeared by contact with domestic utensils, appears. Evidently a fine lady, however, spite of drawbacks, and so accepted by the group—a lady under eclipse, so to say, but able at any moment to remove the clouds incidental to that early hour, and to blaze forth in full lustre at mass.

We enter, under her guidance, a brick-floored room, dirty past belief. She beckons us on into a *salotto* beyond, which is, if possible, still dirtier, and is furnished with a table, two chairs, and an

elaborate portrait of herself gloriously jewelled (as for mass).

There is a pervading odour of fermenting grapes, rotten flax, and decaying apples—an oppressive compound. We rush to the spotted and dirty windows, and fling them open. The sweet herb-scented air and full blaze of sunshine rush in and take possession.

The *cicerone* insisted on by the boy having now arrived—an aged man, who for forty years has done the honours of Porsenna's capital—we mount our crazy vehicle and jolt along charming lanes, through dewy olive-grounds. Not without protest has the *cicerone* been allowed to sit beside the boy, and when we reach a stony perpendicular water-course his indignation boils over, and he is with difficulty restrained from dragging us also bodily out. Protected by the ancient guide and the unanswerable fact that we have paid to ride, we proceed up the bed of the water-course, and find ourselves in the heart of a great oak forest, the huge silver boles free from all underwood—a Salvator Rosa scene of deep gorges, woody ravines, and rifts of red earth.

Much shaken, we get out, spite of the heat. The boy, from being ejaculatory and abusive, has become sulky under the repeated sneers of the

cicerone, who considers walking compromising to his dignity. "If," says he, turning solemnly to the boy, "I came here with your *babbo* (daddy), guiding strangers along these same roads a hundred thousand times, and you cannot conduct these, it is because you are an imbecile,—a baby. You a *vetturino*! Hi! ho! *per carità*—YOU! By the body of Bacchus! what an idea!"

The boy henceforth collapses, maintains a stolid silence, drives like a machine, splashes through deep holes and dangerous ruts, drags his carriage over rocks, scrapes the edge of precipices, and never opens his mouth but to ask a *buona mano* when we part.

A conical hill (*tumulus*) rises out of the wood. Passing under a roof of interlacing boughs and thickly-matted shrubs, we reach a low and almost choked-up aperture; then enter a lofty, sepulchral chamber, twenty feet round. A column supports the centre, and from the side walls open out dark labyrinthine passages, high enough to admit a man on all fours.

This atrium was found adorned with a cornice of solid gold and many beautiful vases. To the right, in a small chamber, one tomb is visible, once containing jewels of such value as to originate the idea that here had lain "Lars Por-

senna of Clusium," the various sepulchral labyrinths seeming to identify it as the mausoleum described by Pliny and Varro. But other tombs have furnished other treasures, and labyrinths are found in nearly all these tombs, and were constructed in order that the spirits of the dead might meet. Corn, wine, and oil were always placed beside the dead, whose spirits were believed to perpetuate the wants and wishes of the body.

Three distinct tiers of sepulchral chambers honeycomb this hill of Poggio Gajella, the upper ones being less ornate and spacious. Around it stood a wall of uncemented blocks of stone enclosing a fosse.

Through a track as uneasy as a nightmare, we struggled downhill some two miles to the outskirts of the forest, beside the small Lake of Chiusi. Lying under a barren hill, near a desolate *podere*, is another sepulchre, called the Deposito del Sovrano, containing eight monuments surmounted by images of the dead. These are of coarse workmanship, but remain *in situ*, resting on rocky benches cut in the sides of the chamber.

Close to Chiusi we visited a third tomb with a painted ceiling of astonishing freshness representing a banquet, at which the guests repose

upon tiger skins. This ceiling is bordered by a cornice of dancing figures.

Whether the Etruscans were of Greek origin, or whether these curious frescoes were executed by Greek artists, remains a mystery; but the men and women here represented are undeniably of the Grecian type. These frescoes will soon be destroyed by the damp that oozes from the hill.

Many painted tombs have been filled in; one by the obstinacy of some nuns, and many others by the peasants, who fear that their beasts may be lost or injured.

CHAPTER III.

The Journey—Monte Oliveto—Razzi.

IT blew a hurricane. The wind swept over the Campagna, howling among the lower hills as if portending an earthquake. Above the barren mountain-tops, murky and threatening with the shadow of the coming storm, lay Monte Oliveto Maggiore, twenty-five miles from Siena, the principal Benedictine establishment of Central Italy.

“What weather shall we have?”

The shock-headed, wild-eyed *vetturino* turned upon us fiercely.

“Weather! *Ah, signori, chi lo sa?* It will be what weather God pleases—how can I tell? With two horses we shall pull along; but the roads, *Domini Deo!* they are straight up like a wall—stay and see! We must go round, too; for if I took the nearest road with this wind, why, *cospetto!* we should be blown over, crossing the mountain. *Avanti!*”

Furious whip-cracking ensued, consequent

bounding, struggling, and kicking of the horses, universal jolting, and great terror on our part! A perpendicular ascent lay before us; the horses jibbed, the carriage ran back.

The *vetturino*, from gaily singing opera airs from *Rigoletto*, broke out into horrible oaths. All that fearful man said was not audible while, leaping from the box, he tore asunder some knots in the harness, the carriage meanwhile tottering on the edge of a deep ravine; but he distinctly cursed the father, the mother, and the ancestors of those who had harnessed the horses. We came also now to know that these horses were put together for the first time, so that their conjointure might be regarded in the light of a doubtful equestrian experiment. The shaft-horse, steady by age and education, was our salvation. The aid, attached to the gig by an improvised bar of wood freshly cut from a roadside tree, was a discursive brute, declining as much as possible to join in the work; now peeping over a precipice, or cantering on in front down a perpendicular descent; now turning round and looking at us full in the face, quite indifferent as to consequences. Trouble, it was clear, lay between us and Monte Oliveto.

Meanwhile, we mounted higher and higher

towards the murky sky waiting to engulf us. The noise of the wind was so terrific that, clinging closely together in a common terror, my companion and I could not hear each other speak. Our lips moved, but the sound was hurled away in deafening blasts—away over those desolate fields of mountain-tops into everlasting space. We clung to our seat, we clung to our hats, we clung to each other. The carriage tottered; the *vetturino* urged the little horses to a mad gallop. Mountains, mountains on every side—before, behind; north, south, east, west—black with the shadows of hurrying clouds scudding before the furious blast—an arid desolation perfectly appalling. A few isolated hovels stood up sharp against the gloomy cloud-background on the tops of distant heights. Even these were far below.

“While this wind-*burrasca* lasts,” screamed our *vetturino* in a momentary lull, “you may bless all the saints—you will get no rain; it is locked up in those clouds—*deluges!* Woe to us if it comes down. *Avanti! Lesto!* Quick, my sons” (to the horses). “Hi! hoo! la—la—la-s-s-s!”

The horses shook their ears and galloped wildly under his lashes.

“See the poor things, how gallant they are!

They can hardly stand, the little lambs; yet they would die sooner than stop."

The rough little horses indeed fought bravely, as if conscious that they ought to distance the tempest; but in vain—the wind caught us everywhere.

"Courage, courage! we are near—our miles are almost done! *Ecco*, have I not driven you as if into paradise? These my sons—have they not been lions? Now, anon, we shall be safe in the convent, and the monks will receive you with *tant*e *gentilezze*. You will forget the storm."

Now a precipitous decline, causing our gig to rock ominously, brought us to a defile through bare clay hills so horrible we screamed aloud.

"A thousand devils!—you have no faith. What is the matter? Here we are. Hi! hoo! la-s-s-s!"

The tired horses relaxed into a walk. Some trees appeared—the first we had seen for hours—bordering the road; and the wind, finding other objects whereon to spend its fury, lulled into sullen moans among the branches. We took a long breath. A deep valley parted the hills below; woods, fields, olives, vineyards, dotted the opposite heights. Through a Gothic gateway, formerly the *clausura*, beyond which no woman passed, a

dense cypress wood received us, and a smooth road zigzagged down to the convent, which lies in a snug valley—an enormous pile, church, convent, and farm, with here and there, among the folds of the overhanging cypress woods, a chapel, or shrine, or statue. A low-walled piazza beside the large church of mellow-tinted bricks overhangs a mountain river splashing far below—a solemn, peaceful spot deep in the bosom of the Apennines.

We were at once welcomed by a gentlemanly monk, dressed in spotless white robes, whose duty it is to conduct strangers over the monastery, which was preserved by the present Government, on the suppression of the religious orders, as a national museum, in the same manner as Monte Cassino, San Francesco d'Assisi, San Marco at Florence, and the Certosa at Pavia.

An arched doorway leads into the cloisters, painted by Razzi and Signorelli in frescoes, of such beauty and artistic significance, it is astonishing that they should be almost unknown even to Italians except by report.

Not only are these works overlooked, but Razzi himself is also unknown out of Italy, although he undoubtedly stood next to Raphael and

his master Leonardo in the judgment of contemporaries.

To him was given a certain easy grace and natural inspiration in representing the Madonna and saints; very women, yet bearing the finest expression of devotion, and full of that subtle mysticism which suggests a dual nature, "something of earth, yet much of heaven." Faces more true and real in their humanity than Raphael ever painted. Razzi, the glory of the Sienese school, by his dissipated and errant life often brought himself and his works into disrepute and ridicule. His wild fancy and inveterate love of fun needed to be mastered and subdued by the utmost rigours of that chastened and devotional school before the great genius which was in him could be fully developed.

When summoned, as a young man, by the general of the Benedictines to Monte Oliveto from Siena, where he passed most of his life, Razzi was scandalising the republic, not by his wickedness (for of that there is no trace), but by the lawless folly and ribaldry which led him and a band of wild admirers to ridicule all that was venerated and honoured in the quaint old city. He was a thorough Bohemian; and painted, and

jeered, and got in and out of scrapes, as is the habit of dwellers in that joyous land.

When this strange being arrived at Monte Oliveto, dressed in picturesque rags, and bringing with him a Noah's ark of tame animals—dogs, chickens, squirrels, doves, tortoises, apes, donkeys, and horses, as well as a tame raven which he had taught to imitate his voice and talk—the astonishment of the whole convent may be conceived. The monks, unused to such a burst from the outer world, were delighted. Razzi brought out his lute and sang sonnets to them; he caricatured them, not too decently; and played, he and his animals, such mad pranks that then and there they nicknamed him *Mattaccio* (archfool), a name that ever after stank in the nostrils of his courtly contemporaries.

Razzi was commissioned by the general to continue the life of St. Benedict begun by Signorelli, who threw up his work here in order to paint at Orvieto. The general, displeased by Razzi's conduct, and uneasy at harbouring such a madcap, criticised his works somewhat freely, declaring that they were painted too much *alla mano* (off-hand).

Razzi, much offended, replied, "that his brush

danced to the sound of his coins, and that if more elaborate work was expected he must be better paid."

Better paid he was; but he owed the general a grudge all the same, and took a very characteristic way of revenging himself. One of the frescoes was to represent a particular temptation of St. Benedict, when a band of dancing women are sent to him by a certain priest who hated him, to disturb him at his devotions.

This particular painting Razzi kept carefully covered during its progress, declaring that he meant to astonish the general by its extraordinary beauty.

At length, the whole convent being assembled in eager curiosity, Razzi, surrounded by his pets, tore down the veil, when behold an exquisite painting indeed, filled with lovely forms, but, horror of horrors! they were nude, and the dance was the *cancan* of that day!

The general, indignant beyond words, turned away, sternly commanding the laughing Razzi to destroy such a *scandalum magnatum*. He declared it was his finest work, and wonderfully true to nature; but, seeing the real anger of the general, a compromise was effected, and the too-charming

damsels were clad in some kind of drapery, in which state they may still be seen by the curious. However, the general was so shocked that he did all he could to get rid of Razzi, who was unduly hurried in his work in consequence. This hurry is visible. The frescoes are broad and sketchy in treatment, but none the less masterly, every touch is seen, and what touches they are!

Razzi has portrayed himself (in a scene where St. Benedict takes leave of his family) in a yellow cloak trimmed with black, which he got from a Milanese gentleman turned monk; his raven and a little pig at his feet. In these great works St. Benedict passes from boyhood to age—the same, yet with admirably varied expression of time and feeling; of penitence and sorrow, when praying against temptation; of reproach, when the poisoned cup is presented to him by his monks; of prayer and confidence, when raising the drowned boy; of dignity, when he sits as chief among his monks assembled in conclave.

The convent, through which we were led by our monk, whose heart still clung to the greatness of his order, is immense. The refectory, vaulted and unsupported by pillars, is one of the vastest rooms in Europe; the library, a huge,

mediæval hall, filled with a valuable collection of books, is still the boast and the delight of the five solitary fathers, who are all that remain of this once great brotherhood.

CHAPTER IV.

The Old Cardinal's Retreat.

WE live in it at the time of this present writing. It is in the Montagnola, an hour distant from Siena, among the mountains bordering the Maremma. The whole country is a forest—such a forest! Giant oaks, wild, scathed, savage-looking, growing on rocky broken ground, with never a stick of underwood; spiky cypresses, gathered up like nosegays; patches of olives—grey, mystic trees said to have paled into that sad tint out of grief for the Divine One who once wept under their shade; vineyards of yellow-leafed grapes, now laden with ruby fruit, clinging to light cane supports. Higher up, fold upon fold of rounded hills, dimpling into each other like the petals of a tulip, and clothed with a dark mantle of evergreen ilex. Beyond lies an expanse of open country broken into long horizontal lines of hills and valleys, waving up and down like the swell of a stormy sea, either utterly barren and

desolate, or thickly dotted with villas, churches, towers, and villages, clinging together as if for company. How easy to give the details; how impossible to paint the varied tints and magic changes of light and shade on this broad horizon; the morning mists; the fervid blue of the mid-day sky; the great white clouds like snow-drifts that come riding up over the dark hill-tops; the ruddy glory of the sunsets! When we came here, the woods were green; now they look as if lighted by living flames. The shadows are those of a furnace, glowing russet, deepest ruby, and richest purple.

In the heart of this fair forest-wilderness a villa stands, built in the Tuscan or rustic style, on a plateau facing the Apennines to the south, and backed by the evergreen forests on the hills. It was built by Cardinal Chigi, brother of Pope Alexander VII., and is still in possession of his descendants. As Louis XIV. created Versailles out of a sand-hill, so the cardinal (attracted to this spot by its exceeding natural beauty) caused this villa-palace to arise out of a virgin forest by the force of gold. He summoned the great architect Fontana to his aid; made roads; pruned the wild forest luxuriance into parks and gardens; formed stately terraces adorned with sculpture;

and placed twelve chapels or stations round the house in the adjacent woods, which he peopled with statues of saints, gods, and satyrs, a mixed but goodly company, looking over the tree-tops on pedestals some sixty feet high, and startling the sight in unexpected places. He also caused to be traced from the northern front of the villa a broad grassy alley (spanned midway by a triumphal arch, and further on by a theatre for *al fresco* performances), from whence, rising abruptly—always in a straight line and forming a vista from the villa—two hundred steps of stone, cut through the forest, form a *Scala Santa*, or sacred staircase, mounting to a high tower on the summit of the hill, where twelve monks, living in twelve cells, said prayers for his eminence and all his family, day and night.

When all was done, our cardinal called the place THE THEBAID, in memory of his lowly brethren, the starving monks of the Egyptian desert, who would mightily have enjoyed the change from arid sand, thirst, and hunger, to this refined and luxurious hermitage. Pope Alexander, out of the funds of St. Peter, left it also a noble revenue, along with many broad acres on Tuscan and on Roman soil, which have come down unlessened to the present day. The Thebaid is

therefore maintained with fitting splendour by the Marquis Chigi, its present owner.

The saloons and galleries within are still decked with old frescoes, gilding, marbles, and statues, to which are added the comforts of our own present time. A crowd of modern retainers, valets, keepers, stewards, gardeners, shepherds, come and go over the grassy court within the gates, where in the morning are often to be seen seated patiently on a certain stone bench, waiting to be served, whole families of beggars—poor yellow-faced wretches, who all receive a dole of bread and wine, according to ancient custom, in spite of the vigorous remonstrances and often violent interposition of Argo, the watch-dog, who is as large and as white as a polar bear.

The old Cardinal's Retreat has its ghost, of course. One evening we had been tempted by the wondrous beauty of the moonlight into the woods. The twisted ilex trunks looked down upon us like a fantastic multitude hovering in the deep shadows; above, the moon rose in an unclouded sky. We went on, and descended from the plateau into the Siena road, over-arched with black branches. On one side, a wall borders this road; on the other, where the ground falls rapidly and the road is terraced, there is not even a

parapet, but a fall of some ten or fourteen feet. The night was very still. Nothing but the distant baying of a dog broke the silence. Suddenly a sound of wheels came on us, beginning very faintly—then ceasing—then coming on again. At last it grew loud and distinct, and proved to be a *baroccino* (gig) returning late from Siena with some of our people—Antonio, butler; Adamo, keeper; and Filippo, gardener.

“Oh, *signori, signori!*” gasped Antonio, “we have just seen the *donnina*; there, just below, between the Satiro” [a great statue] “and this chapel here. We saw her as plainly as we see you, standing in the middle of the road, with her head bent down.”

“Yes,” broke in Adamo, shaking himself as if waking out of a nightmare, “yes, indeed! *Santa Maria!* I was leading the horse—for the road is so rough, and the shadows are so dark—when I saw in the moonlight a woman with something over her head, like the peasant-women wear. She came out of this wall and glided across the road; close before me. She disappeared over the parapet among the woods. *Anima mia!* she was there beside me, for the horse saw her too, and so started and shied that he nearly threw the gig over the parapet.”

"Indeed, *signori*," said Antonio, "the gig jerked, and I was almost thrown out. I saw the *donnina* too."

"Yes, but not so plainly as I did," cried Adamo. "I tell you she passed close—close to my hand, under the horse's nose, with a cloth on her head and a spindle in her hand! She passed across the road over that deep fall, which must have killed any mortal creature."

These two men had been soldiers, were no cowards, and were ready to face any mortal foe bravely. They were comforted with wine and sent to bed. We then sent for the head man—the *fattore*—to ask what it all meant.

It meant that from father to son, so long back that no one can tell where it began, it had been known among the peasants that these woods are haunted by a ghost in the shape of a woman of small stature, known as the *donnina*, who generally appears towards dusk, after the *Ave Maria*, at special spots, and usually in stormy weather. She had been often seen where the servants had seen her, in the wood on the road to Siena; also in a deep hollow or *borro*, the bed of a torrent, dry in summer, and blocked with masses of rock and rolling stones, brought down by the upper streams

—an ugly, lonesome place, with exceedingly steep banks, overgrown with scanty shrubs.

She generally appears, we were told, in black, her head covered, her face bent down over a spindle, which she seems to turn as she moves. Nobody has ever seen her face. There is nothing terrific or horrible about her, save the fact that she is supernatural. She always glides slowly away, so slowly as to be distinctly seen disappearing among rocks, or over walls, in the woods. Not a year passes that she is not seen several times, especially towards early winter.

We spoke with those to whom she has most frequently appeared. An old man, by name Curini, a mason, remembered that once, as he was returning home, he saw a woman whom he supposed, in the fading light, to be his daughter, sitting on the wall of a rough little bridge that crosses the stream in the *borro*, spinning. Her back was turned towards him. “*Ah, Teresa mia*, are you waiting for me?” he said, putting out his hand to touch her shoulder. The hand fell upon air; the figure rose (the back still turned towards him), slowly glided away down the steep bank of the *borro*, and vanished among the big rocks heaped up there. He has often seen the *donnina*

since, but never has been conscious of feeling the horror he felt then.

Then we talked with a keeper called Carlo di Ginestreto, a fine Saxon-looking fellow, with honest round blue eyes and a shock of uncombed yellow hair. This Carlo has his home on the hill over the *borro*, and had seen the *donnina* among the trees there three months ago. "Once," he said, "I was coming from Siena along the road, and there had been a heavy fall of snow, and the moon was extremely clear, and everything in the forest was as plain as day. I was coming along, thinking of a new gun I had seen in Siena, when I saw standing in the middle of the road, the *donnina* as plain as I see your excellency now before me. She stood there till I was almost close to her. She wore a sort of light petticoat with colours on it, and had something all black, over it, on her head and shoulders. There I saw her, and I saw her shadow in the moonlight, too. She looked like a girl, though I did not see her face, and she went away, *piano, piano, piano*, as I stood still, and faded out among the trees. I never saw her so plainly, for the snow made all so clear. I often see her, *poverina!* I do not feel any fear. What harm could she do to me?" And he spread out his large chest, and lifted his long

arms with that ejaculatory action common to Italians.

After Carlo came Celso, a respectable *contadino* living also on the estate in a vineyard close to the villa. He told us "that after he had come back from serving in the militia, he was standing one evening with his little brother in the road, near the Satiro, when he heard himself called distinctly three times, out of the wood, in a strange sad voice, '*Celso! Celso! Celso!*' His little brother said, 'Who calls you, Celso, in such a strange voice?' and he heard the same voice call him again when he was alone in the wood." He was frightened, and liked it so little that he now never passed by that road in the evening, but went "round a mile or so, higher up on the hills."

We have more material mysterious personages going about the old Cardinal's Retreat, too, as will presently be seen; and we have incentives to strange fancies out of number.

On one side of the villa, adjoining the broad terrace leading to the *Scala Santa*, is a pleasure-ground or park, designed and specially set apart by the cardinal for meditation and repose. It may be some two or three miles round, and is enclosed by a high wall, and entered by three

lofty gates. It is full of broad, moss-grown walks, with here and there statues of monks and angels, high on carved pedestals, in attitudes of prayer. The walks and narrower paths are all knit up at the further end by a chapel somewhat small and low, with kneeling statues on either hand, darkened and moss-grown by time and storm. The trees are the ilex of the surrounding forest, expanded into superb proportions by being so long undisturbed. The ground is rocky and undulating, covered with a graceful undergrowth of arbutus, holly, and laurustinus; every plant and every tree being evergreen. The big branches of the ilex trees, with long silvery beards of delicate white moss hanging down amidst the glittering waxy leaves, pointed like thorns, wave over the paths, and cast flickering shadows as the eager sun darts through the dark foliage. As the passing clouds come and go over the surface of the chapel, here and there a glint of sun calls out the dark outlines of the kneeling statues so vividly that at a distance, looking upon them through a screen of fluttering leaves, they seem to move under the changing light. This is, in truth, a very weird and ghostly spot, set apart, as it should seem, for unholy rites, altogether solemn and mystic!

Here, in the brief though ardent autumnal sunshine, impenetrable shade tempts one to wander among the rocks, and between the dark twisted ilex stems, all speckled and flecked with patches of black and white mosses, like the breast of a bird; or to rest on a carpet of moss, and hear the ripe acorns drop from the evergreen oaks among the dry leaves: or to listen to the busy twitter of the departing birds arranging their winter flight, as they circle round and round, pecking the ripe arbutus berries. Here, too, come the bees of the year, gathering honey from the scented herbs. It is a rare place in which to watch the last pale butterflies hovering among the aromatic flowers of the cyclamen and caper which grow in the crevices of the rocks; and the little green lizards racing over the stones, or lurking immovable in some sunny corner, watching for the harmless wood-snake which still creeps out to enjoy the mid-day warmth. As day declines in this strange and beautiful wood, the gathering clouds put out one by one the bright lights on rock and leaf and stem; and a gloom gathering around, and a silence of all those inarticulate utterances that people woods with life, tell of darkness and approaching night.

One day, sitting in the thickest tangle, near

where the hill abruptly descends towards the Siena road and the statue of the Satiro, we heard a low whistle—then another whistle answered in an opposite direction—then the sound of many feet crushing the leaves, and of the branches a-flapping as of men passing through them. We promptly made for the house, where the polar bear was aloft on a wall barking furiously, and some serving-men were standing in the court around a group of five rough fellows, each carrying a long gun. One of these, a fair-complexioned youth, rather hump-backed, of about twenty, was armed also with a short sword. This fellow, the spokesman, had walked in, followed by his band, and desired to see the master; for he wanted money. When told that the master was out, he asked for the *fattore*, and still for money. The *fattore* also being invisible, he demanded wine and bread. Gathering up the fragments given him, he and his band all took their departure up the *Scala Santa*.

This intrusion was followed by all sorts of reports. There was a band of six men on the hills over the villa, above the hermitage, their chief, a young man called Campanello, humpbacked, and about twenty-three years old, a deserter. They had guns and revolvers. They had gone to the

residence of an old priest, and when he sent out word to them that he could give them no money, had fired on the house. A peasant, passing at the break of day to his work in the hills, had found a large fire burning, and, sitting down to warm himself, received a blow on his head from a stone hurled at him out of the trees. Other stories came in, telling how the same band had appeared near Siena, twenty-five in number, disguised in black and red masks; had waylaid and robbed people returning from the city market; had bound them to trees, and so left them. Another story told how a certain Bindi had found his villa entirely surrounded one evening, and how he had ransomed himself for five hundred francs. Later came the gendarmes in good earnest, who were refreshed with wine and meat, and then dispersed themselves in the woods to hunt for Campanello.

One evening, just at dinner-time, a peasant appeared, looking very scared, in the court before the villa, holding in his hand a piece of raw meat. So many peasants came and went with such strange burdens of comestibles for the *chef*, that this excited no surprise, until the man with the raw meat made his way to an open gallery enclosed by a

lofty iron *grille*, by which the great hall is entered. Here he stopped, and accosting one of the servants, said he had a message to the Marquis Chigi, which he must deliver personally. We were all in the hall waiting for the dinner-bell, and came out. There stood the trembling peasant, holding his raw meat, which with a low obeisance he presented to the marquis. In a slit in the meat was a dirty little letter to the effect "that Campanello demanded five hundred francs to be placed that night, after the moon had set, under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses in the middle of the forest; and that if the *padrone* did not comply with Campanello's demand, he and his might confess to the family priest, and consider themselves dead." The peasant, being asked why he had made himself the bearer of such a threat, replied, "That Campanello and his band had surrounded his cottage, and that he had shut himself up for some time; but, being obliged to feed the beasts, had at last gone out. That he still found the brigands there, revolver in hand, and gun on shoulder; and Campanello was armed with a short sword. That Campanello had threatened to shoot him, and to hamstring his oxen, if he did not carry the letter." But it was shrewdly suspected that he had more

dealings with the band than he cared to own.

The matter duly considered, it was resolved to give the men twenty francs, which were duly placed under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses, in the middle of the forest, at ten o'clock that same night. Some of our party proposed the three gendarmes and an ambush; but as Campanello's men were desperadoes, and as an honest man may be picked off from behind a tree as well as another, and as we were hemmed in on all sides by trees, it was deemed prudent to do without the gendarmes and the ambush.

Now, it is to be remembered that these men—still roving up and down our hills under cover of the evergreen woods now before my eyes as I write—are fed, and clothed, and do not generally sleep out of a bed. Therefore it is pretty clear that if the peasants living here and there, on redeemed fields of corn and olive, on the sunny sides of the slopes, spoke out, the brigands would be soon caught. But your Tuscan peasant is the veriest coward living. He trembles before any Campanello whom he meets; he lodges him, and

feeds him, and conceals him, and would swear his face black and blue before he would betray him. It is fair to the poor fellow to bear in mind that, if he did otherwise, some members of the band, or some other members of some other bands acting on oral instruction, would then and there mark him, as a hunter does a stag; would scent him out and shoot him (and perhaps his children) from behind a convenient tree; fire his house, and strew ashes on his hearth-stone. This in spite of the magnificent defence offered by Government, in the shape of three gendarmes, attired in a brilliant uniform of white, yellow, and blue, with cocked hats as big as Dr. Syntax wore when he went out searching for the picturesque—announcing them at least a mile off, in fine contrast to the emerald mantle of the woods—over a district forty miles in extent. Such facts will not be found chronicled in local newspapers; neither will they be admitted in the clubs of Florence nor other large cities, where it is convenient to believe pleasant things only; but they are true none the less, and *we*, who receive polite correspondence in raw meat in the old Cardinal's Retreat, well know them to be true.

Great news has just come in. Campanello was taken last night. He was living at free quar-

ters on an unfortunate peasant on the very summit of the topmost heights, over the Romitorio, looking towards Volterra. But, in this case, love was stronger than fear of vengeance. He had deeply incensed a youth who was in love with one of the peasant's daughters by paying his court to her, and by offering her some trinkets supposed to have been stolen, which she wore. This youth, by name Oreste, went in his fury straight to a town called Rosia, and informed our friends, the three gendarmes who lived there, where Campanello was to be found, and promised to conceal them until he could be taken. In the meantime, poor Campanello, led away by the same fatal passion of love, lent himself blindly to his pursuer's devices. That very evening there was a dance given at a neighbouring cottage. Thither went Campanello in pursuit of his fair one, unarmed, even leaving his little sword in the house where he slept. In the middle of the dance, however, he caught sight of our brilliant friends, conspicuous in their war-paint, as they naturally would be, and, escaping by a back entrance, rushed off in flight. But Fate again met him in the shape of the injured lover, Oreste, who was watching outside. He sprang upon him; tied him up until the gendarmes arrived; secured him; and,

already scenting the sweet savour of a Government reward for the capture of a *capo brigante* and a deserter, triumphantly led him off to prison.

CHAPTER V.

Start from Siena; Monte Varchi; Mr. B.—Brigands; Arezzo—
Cortona; Lake of Thrasymentis; Perugia.

A SUDDEN fancy seized me to visit Arezzo and Perugia by *vetturino*, on my way to Rome, and a relative (Mr. B——) offered to accompany me.

Behold us, then, rising with the sun one fine morning early in October, and consigning ourselves to a lumbering vehicle, furnished with unlimited appliances for luggage, and drawn by four invalid horses, jingling with bells and wearing a certain species of fur nightcap, without which it is considered unorthodox to travel. The morning mists hung about the summits of the mountains, partially concealing the domes and campanile of the city, and partially revealing the rich olive gardens, pastures, and luxuriant vineyards along the road. The Chianti Hills and the higher ridge of Apennines were continually in view, each dent and crevice and water-course on their rugged sides marked with deep lines of shadow.

We were to strike the Arezzo road at Monte Varchi, where we had arranged to rest. My companion—a stern, hard man—was somewhat of a character. He was possessed of two ideas, viz., that Italy, including Rome, was on the eve of a republic; and that the Italians were, to a man, about to renounce Catholicism, expel the Pope, and massacre the priests. These and other equally startling facts, learnt from Mazzini, who was his intimate friend during his exile in London, Mr. B—— imparted to me in a solemn voice many times every day. The object of his present visit to Italy was to witness these marvellous events, and, if it were possible, to discover any locality where *the meat* was tolerable. If he did not succeed, he intended to return to London immediately. With Siena he was utterly disgusted; but having heard that the rich Umbrian plains furnished a good market at Perugia, he begged to accompany me thither, on his way to Rome.

It was market day at Monte Varchi, and the miserable wayside *osteria* was in indescribable confusion. House and stables were all in one, only the bipeds had the first story and the quadrupeds the *terreno* (ground-floor). Somehow or other we were continually turning up, however, into the

stable, where upwards of two hundred horses were munching their oats.

"I wish I was a horse," said Mr. B——; "I could travel then. Oats are generally good everywhere; but the vicissitudes of diet to which my system is exposed in this unhappy country, caused by the contrasts and admixture of butchers' meat...."

The arrival of a travelling carriage fortunately interrupted Mr. B——; it was only, however, a reprieve.

Out of the carriage tumbled six ladies of various ages, attended by a fat courier in a fine Polish jacket decorated with fur. He gave himself such airs that, in the absence of any other male, I took him for the papa, until I saw him run into the kitchen with a struggling fowl in his hand. The ladies could speak neither French nor Italian, and therefore depended entirely on the courier. They kept their eyes bent steadily on the ground, and looked as though they had come to Italy for a penance. There was a common *sala* into which we were all crammed, together with some local potentates—*fattori* (stewards) and *mercanti di Campagna*, rough fellows, smelling of tobacco and garlic—by an unscrupulous *padrona*, who, reasoning upon the principle of equality and

fraternity established below among the horses, treated us accordingly. The English family were so overcome by their feelings that, escorted by the courier in the furred jacket, they retreated into a bedroom.

Mr. B—— grimly smiled. "The day is at hand," said he, waving his hand majestically towards the retreating ladies, "when these fictitious distinctions will cease—in Italy at least, where the republic is about to be proclaimed." As Mr. B——, seated in an old arm-chair, was evidently preparing for an oration, I escaped below among the horses.

Here stood knots of carmen and drivers in blue cotton jackets—rough, brutish fellows, who never speak without tremendous oaths. Here, too, was the kitchen, where the cook was frantically cutting and cooking cutlets, brought in by a ragged, barefooted child, who seemed to live on the run between the butcher's and the kitchen.

At last we were served in a scrambling way at separate tables, and, because our dinner was brought up first, an eternal enmity was awakened in the breasts of the English ladies and their fat courier—an enmity from which we suffered all the way to Perugia.

After two weary hours we started down the

one crowded street of Monte Varchi, where it would have been easy to walk on the people's heads. We crossed a fertile plain bordered by low hills, ploughed to the steepest summit by pretty milk-white oxen with crimson housings. Fine single oak trees were scattered here and there, soon melting into a tangled wood, excellent for concealment; therefore very alarming to me, as suggestive of brigands. I confess I would gladly have proceeded at a much more rapid pace than our wretched team could accomplish. These forests near Arezzo have always been, and are still, a favourite haunt of banditti; and although the organised bands have long been exterminated by the Government, alarming isolated cases of plunder and violence occur every year. We came to a clearing in some oaks, just like a landscape by Salvator Rosa. It was a natural amphitheatre formed in what had once been an old gravel-pit, half a mile, perhaps, in circumference. The sides were high and rugged—wild, goblin trees overhung the edges, and stretched out their scathed branches over banks indented with dark holes and narrow openings, admirably adapted for concealment. A long stone bridge occupied the bottom of this pass, the road ascending on the opposite side. This ill-looking locality

was called Palazzaccio, and was once infested by the notorious brigand Spadolino. This Spadolino was a sort of hero in his way, affecting to rob the rich in order to assist the poor; and so gaining no end of partisans among the peasants, who are always, as I have said, too ready to wink at this kind of thing.

The story goes that there was once a certain miller, called Giacomo, who had long kneaded his loaves in peace, with a large family rising around him, until bad times came. Starvation threatened him, he could not pay his rent, and he was to be turned out of the mill he had long looked on as his home. Giacomo, in despair, sought the deep recesses of this very wood, wandering up and down its park-like glades, until at last, throwing himself on his face on the grass, he burst out into cries and groans with true Italian *furore*. Chance had led him into the immediate haunt of Spadolino, who, hearing a noise, appeared suddenly, as a brigand always should.

The miller, having nothing to lose, was bold with the courage of utter poverty. He looked up, weeping and wringing his hands, though Spadolino stood before him armed to the teeth, and carrying his gun in his hand.

“*Che roba e questa?*” quoth Spadolino; “and,

mille diavoli, why are you making such a noise in my wood?"

"*Ahimè!*" cried the miller, "I care neither for you nor for the devil, whom you may be, for aught I know. I am ruined and undone, unless by this time to-morrow, when the *fattore* returns, I can produce ninety *francesconi* to pay my rent. Let the blessed Virgin help me if I have a single *quattrino*! I shall be turned out into the wood, and my poor *bambini* will starve!" And with that he buried his face again in his hands, and roared louder than before.

"Do you know me?" said Spadolino, grasping him by the arm.

"No," replied the miller; "but I guess you are a brigand by your dress. *Cosa mi fa?*"

Spadolino—still holding him by the arm—looked him straight in the face. "*Cospetto!* if you knew me, you would be glad to see me; for I can help you. Yes, *amico mio*, I can help you, if you ask me. I am Spadolino, who never yet refused a poor man in distress. You shall have the money; my hand on it."

"*Jesù Maria!*" cried Giacomo, jumping up and seizing the brigand's iron fist, "is this true? Are you Spadolino? Oh, angel of Providence! oh, saviour of my children! *Grazie, grazie!*" and

down he fell on his knees, and kissed Spadolino's feet.

"Well," said the latter, "I am glad you have left off howling. Give yourself no thought. You have seen me—you have my word. Go home, and drink my health in water, if you have no wine—drink to Spadolino, the friend of the poor, and the terror of the rich. I may not be able to help you again, for the *sbirri* are close upon me; and I have dreamed too often lately of the domes of Florence—a bad sign, for I shall never see them again until my time is come."

That evening a carriage was stopped crossing this very bridge at the bottom of this very pass, and a rich booty secured. Spadolino, as cruel to the rich as he was merciful to the poor, deliberately cut the throats of the men it contained, and left the women in the road mourning over their corpses. Women, he told his band, were no subjects for him, and he would neither injure nor insult them, nor carry them into the wood, as the younger among that amiable brotherhood suggested. As soon as the earliest streaks of morning tinged the neighbouring Apennines, the miller returned to the spot where they had met the previous night, and there he found Spadolino

somewhat pale and anxious, but holding in his hand the promised money tied up in a bag.

"Here," said he, "is the gold. Let one man, at least, bless me, though my hands be bloody."

The miller shuddered, as he saw that so indeed they were; but, without asking inconvenient questions, he clutched the bag, earnestly thanking him as the saviour of his fortunes.

"Ay, you may thank me," said Spadolino gloomily, "for this night's work shall be my last. If I can escape into the Romagna, I will never draw knife again in Tuscany. The spies are too close upon me. Go, *amico mio*, carry this money home; and when the *fattore* comes to turn you out of your mill, throw it into his face, and let him feel 'tis genuine."

The miller faithfully followed his advice, and by mid-day felt doubly gratified by having paid his rent and insulted the *fattore*. But poor Spadolino had run his race. This last robbery and murder had been hurried and ill-combined. When the gendarmes arrived on the spot, they traced the band into the recesses of the forest. Spadolino was taken, and soon afterwards hung at the Porta Santa Croce at Florence, to the infinite sorrow of the grateful miller, who, however, held his tongue

most determinedly as to his own share in this catastrophe.

We are still wandering in the romantic forest which covers the district.

Not a house is visible. To the left lie the deep blue Apennines in heavy lines, like a background by Tintoretto. The shades of evening are gathering around. No wonder that our talk is of brigands as the carriage lazily pursues its way.

Mr. B—— remembered to have seen Gasparone (the great *capo brigante*, who was known and dreaded all over Italy) some years ago at Cività Vecchia, after his surrender. He was allowed to walk up and down upon some particular wall or bastion, from whence he was visible, and people went in flocks to gaze on him. He hated the priests, too, like a true Italian, and with good cause, for the treacherous trick played on him to induce his voluntary surrender—a true specimen of the Punic faith in vogue among these black-robed gentry, and in perfect accordance with the priestly motto, that the end justifies the means. Gasparone, who, perhaps, was the most finished specimen of a brigand that ever lived, had long exercised his trade unmolested, and quietly robbed, plundered, and murdered quite *à fantaisie* in the

Campagna, where his name was much more feared than the Pope's. He had somewhere or other a cavern which extended five miles underground like a catacomb; and when the unhappy soldiers were sent out against him, they were shot down by dozens—out of the trees, as it seemed, for no living mortal could be seen. All hope of capturing him by fair means was abandoned, when the priests at last bethought them of a stratagem, which one of their number undertook to put into execution.

This priest—who, by the way, must have had immense moral courage—was a sickly, thin ascetic, with want stamped on every feature of his starved countenance. He set out from Rome; discovered one of the entrances into the famous, or rather infamous cavern; and, without more ado, walked boldly in. When he made his appearance, the bandits were so utterly taken aback by his temerity that they forgot to shoot him. They then became curious to know what madman could thus have ventured voluntarily into their lair. The entire band—two hundred in number—gathered round him, their murderous faces lit up by the glare of the torches, which burnt continually in this subterranean garrison. There was a sound of blood in the wild yell with which they demanded

what he wanted, at the same time jangling their knives and stilettoes in an ominous chorus. But the priest stood firm.

"I want," said he, "to know if a brigand chief called Gasparone is to be found here?"

There was a devilish chuckle in reply, which expressed Yes! And the fearful crowd pressed still closer round the priest.

"What do you want with Gasparone?" at last said one of the band.

"I come," replied the priest, "with a message to him from the Holy Father." And at his name he uncovered and crossed himself as coolly as if he saw the Pope in a holiday procession at St. Peter's. "But this message," resumed he, "I must deliver to himself alone; therefore I am come to see your chief, whom people call Gasparone."

The bandits were astonished, and almost respected the thin, helpless priest for his courage. The crowd fell back; the stilettoes no longer rattled; and the men formed into small groups, seeming to discuss among themselves whether or not they should lead him to Gasparone. At last one of the number disappeared.

When Gasparone, keeping his savage state in his own peculiar den, heard that a priest wanted

to see him, he burst into a peal of savage laughter that made the long gallery echo again. Then he swore a horrid oath, and bade his followers bring the visitor into his presence. "What, *diavolo*," cried he, "does the madman mean, that he comes here to run his head into the noose? Is he weary of his convent life, and wants me to shorten it? *Cospetto*, I will soon do his business, if that be all! But in with the *canaglia*; let me hear what he brings from our brother the Pope."

The priest appeared, and in a tone of perfect composure repeated his errand.

"I come," said he, "with a message of mercy from the Holy Father; and to tell you that which, did I not come, you could never know in these deep caverns, though it is on all men's tongues."

"But," cried Gasparone, "we come up to the daylight sometimes, though, as the Pope well knows, for bravely have we plucked many a fat *monsignore*. What, then, is this message we do not know?"

"It is an offer of pardon—entire pardon to you and every bandit who surrenders within three days from this time. No conditions are affixed; the Holy Father seeks only the souls of sinners. This decree is hung up on every cross, and in the four ways along the great roads. But how were

you to know this down below? The three days would have expired—mercy would have no longer been offered—therefore I am come to bring you pardon and peace.”

Gasparone frowned, and was silent. For awhile he seemed to weigh what the priest said, and eyed him askance, as if to detect any treachery. But the man of black stood unmoved, his hands folded on his breast.

“What assurance,” at last said Gasparone, “have I for the sincerity of this offer? How am I to know it is not all an infernal trick?”

“It is a Papal ordinance, signed and sealed in due form, as all may see, and as you may assure yourself. During the next three days there is a truce, and even you, Gasparone, and your band, may walk at large. You can judge for yourself if I am not speaking the truth.”

“We will see,” moodily replied the chief. He waved his hand, the priest withdrew, and passed out through the long passages by which he had entered.

Gasparone, relying on the word of the messenger, during the stated truce did personally satisfy himself as to the truth of the statement. The ordinance, drawn up with every formality, and bearing the impress of the Papal arms, was



hung on every column and cross of the great thoroughfares. On the third day, Gasparone and his band of two hundred surrendered formally to the magistrates. It was a great sight to see these ferocious men, redolent of murders, dripping as it were with blood, come with their arms in their hands, and retire shorn of all their strength, like Samson of his locks, and helpless as he.

But oh, incredible extent of priestly treachery! No sooner were the wretched men disarmed than they were seized by the Papal troops, and imprisoned. No excuse was given, no Jesuitry attempted for this vile breach of faith. Gasparone was locked up in the Castel Sant' Angelo, afterwards to be transferred to the prison at Cività Vecchia, where Mr. B—— had, as I said, seen him. The brigand yet lives, I believe, but has been sent to Corsica, that *alma mater* of all Italian *vauriens*. The priest—the instrument in this vile transaction—was at once shipped off to Florence, out of the way of the revengeful stilettoes of the Romans. Had he remained on their side the Apennines he was a dead man.

But while we are prosing about bandits and murders the forest has ended. We are in the plain, and on a rocky ridge opposite appears Arezzo (where we are to pass the night) encircled

by walls, and backed by the stern Apennines, all bare and treeless, and now darkening into night.

On arriving, we are ushered into the same Italian inn that somehow meets one everywhere, whether in the far recesses of Venetian Lombardy, or in the uttermost parts of the Romagna. It is always an old *palazzo* which has seen better days, and wears a proud, disdainful look, as if resenting the indignity put upon it by transforming it into a *caravansérai*. The lower range of windows is always closely barred like a prison. There is a great open door, and an enormous staircase, broad enough for a parish to mount abreast, generally rather dirty. On arriving at the top, corridors open in all directions, cold and bare, with great windows looking into unknown back premises, where the *vetturino* drivers live and swear, amid a strong odour of horses and garlic. Now the *cameriere*, *alias* waiter, ushered us into a large room, with two or three small iron bedsteads, no carpet, very little furniture, and an over-allowance of doors, which, being open, present long perspectives of bedrooms precisely similar. These doors he carefully closed and locked, leaving us finally to our fate, with one tallow candle and no snuffers, so that we feel

very miserable. Dinner is promised at once—*subito momento*—and this prospect warms us for half an hour; but the *subito* of an Italian may be put, Anglicè, into the word “*never*.” We wait, and wait. An hour has elapsed, and no dinner is forthcoming. At last Mr. B—— proposes ringing, but alas! there is no bell; so I rush wildly out, and adventuring rashly into the labyrinth of corridors, get lost; but meeting with a servant, expostulate, am shown the dining-room (a very back room indeed), and delicately and politely told that as the *vetturino* pays for everything (“*pensa a lei*” is the phrase—don’t I know it, ill-luck to it!), they cannot put themselves out of the way for a private family, who may be plucked *ad libitum*. All this is expressed quite politely by a gentlemanly young man with a well-kept moustache, who, on your earnest supplication—now grown into a downright complaint—still promises the dinner *subito*. At this point our rage is raised to the highest pitch by a report from my maid, that through an open door she has seen the English family dining most comfortably amid floods of light, and waited on with great state by the courier in the Polish jacket. This is absolutely maddening, and we feel it so; particularly Mr. B——, who, cold and hungry as he is, looks

sterner than ever, walks about the room, and talks to himself. At last, after two hours' expectation, dinner is announced. We make a kind of rush, like hungry wolves; for, after all, the animal passions are the foundation of our nature, and will *out* sometimes! The very back room is now decorated with more tallow candles, and the presence of two most genteel young gentlemen, who take off the tureen cover with a flourish. There is the same discoloured hot water with vermicelli swimming about in it, which we have had ever since we arrived in Italy, and which follows us along with the inn wherever we stop. There, too, is the wine, which, being admirable vinegar, Mr. B—— rejects with a fierce glance at the waiter, and a horrid grimace. After the soup comes a *frittura* of artichokes, lambs' brains, and combs of cocks; then a horrid lump of indigestible, sodden-looking beef without any gravy, and some chickens which certainly had been enjoying life at Arezzo until a very late hour in the afternoon. A diminutive pudding, with some apples and chestnuts, ends the repast, and we are left to our gloomy reflections. Mr. B—— is excessively angry.

"I cannot really," said he, "stand this kind of thing; it is dreadful to be in a country where

there is no meat. I cannot live without good meat, and therefore I cannot remain in Italy."

I suggest the meat at Siena being tolerable.

"I regret to say," he replies solemnly, "that I did not find it so. I am half starved, for since I have been in Italy I cannot eat. If the meat is not good at Rome, I shall not remain there a week, and I much doubt it."

"At such a place as Rome I could, I think, live on leather," said I.

"Pardon me, you would do extremely wrong to think of such a monstrosity. When Italy is revolutionised, and the real productiveness of the soil belongs to the people generally, there will be good meat, and I shall probably return. The revolution must inevitably take place in about—"

Knowing his one idea, and suffering intensely from it, I got up a tremendous fit of coughing and withdrew, leaving Mr. B—— in the midst of a grand oration about Mazzini. Gladly did I retreat to the small iron bedstead, which, having no head-board or bolster, was difficult to lie in, as the pillow would always tumble down backwards. But I got expert at last, and went to sleep, resolving to see a little of Arezzo in the morning.

In the morning I rose before it was light.

All was dim and grey in the Strada Maestra, whose upper portion is so steep that a carriage could by no means be dragged up. The town hangs, as it were, on the side of a mountain. To my right I noticed a fine Gothic church, with rows of delicate open arcades mounting tier above tier on the façade. This was Santa Maria della Pieve, said to have been once a temple of Bacchus. I hurried up the hill, and yonder on the summit rose the Duomo, but alas! like all its fellows in Tuscany, with an unfinished façade. The interior, though not large, is grandly impressive—a small pattern of that glorious pile at Milan. There was just light enough to disclose the great stone pillars of the aisles supporting pointed arches, rising out of deep masses of shadow. In the choir some splendid stained glass, in lancet windows, flung back the sun's first rays, in blue and crimson, on the pavement. I love the solemn grandeur of these Gothic churches, where the pure stone, unadorned by painting or gilding, rises in pillared simplicity to the fretted roof, all pure and virginal as a maiden dedicated to Heaven. This building was to me full of devotion. At one splendid altar, divided from the body of the church by portals of gilt bronze, the lights were still burning, their waning flames

paling in the morning sun. I had no time to study monuments, pictures, or statues, but I took in the gloomy magnificence of the whole, and was satisfied. Beside the church, which stands high above the city, there is a large square, laid out in avenues of trees as a public promenade; it reminded me of the pretty Lizza at Siena, only there are no statues or monuments here. Indeed, the situation of Arezzo is very similar to Siena: there is the same splendid panoramic view from the walls of the surrounding Apennines, and the same fruity valleys at their feet, diversified with villas and villages, gardens and olive woods. Only the situation of Arezzo is incomparably the finest, the mountains being far grander and more rugged than those which encircle Siena.

As I descended from the square I saw the house where Petrarch was born. It is very small, containing only a door and three small windows. But one could not be sentimental, for the place had freshly been painted and whitewashed, and looked provokingly modern. Next door, too, was a barrack, where the soldiers were already practising the drum, so I fairly ran away. The air of Arezzo—supposed to be very favourable to talent since Petrarch, Vasari, and other geniuses were born here—was exceedingly nipping at this early

hour of an October morning. Petrarch declares, modestly, IF he had any talent it was owing to his birth in the neighbourhood, near enough to breathe "*la sottilità dell' aria d'Arezzo;*" and I declare, if the keenness of the atmosphere was meant, I do not wonder that some extraordinary effect was produced.

Near the Duomo, on the slope of the hill, is the *Gran Piazza*, ornamented by a row of houses designed by Vasari. The guide-books praise the architectural beauties of these *Loggie*, as they are called, but I could see little in them to admire. There is a pretty old fountain, round which the old Italian crones were already gossiping and washing vegetables. Before leaving Arezzo, which was one of the twelve Etruscan cities, I must make honourable mention of its wine, a fine, sweet sherry, light in quality, but as agreeable a beverage as a traveller could desire to refresh himself withal.

The road to Cortona from Arezzo, as well as the railroad, skirts the base of the mountain-chain on which both cities stand. To the right is the fertile plain of Chiana, the richest, perhaps, of the many rich agricultural districts of Italy, extending on a dead level for upwards of thirty miles, shut in by pale outlines of distant mountains. The

entire drive to our mid-day resting place at Camuscia was delightful. I must say I wish heartily there was no such place as Camuscia, which, being situated on the low ground, gives the *vetturini* an excuse for not ascending the mountain, where Cortona fronts the luxuriant plain. This, the most ancient of the twelve Etruscan cities, looks in the distance quite Moresque, with its domes, spires, and turrets, all of a fine brown tint, standing out in high relief against the brilliant sky. I looked at the place with a mysterious feeling of reverence when I remembered that tradition assigns it an almost fabulous antiquity, and that those frowning walls are supposed to have been built by the Pelasgi before the siege of Troy!

But alas! common life will assert its power in the most solemn spots. We are hungry and thirsty in the ruins of Pompeii; take lunch, drink champagne, and talk scandal in the catacombs; and dally on the brink of Etna. *Telle est la vie.* While I was contemplating Cortona out of the windows of the inn, my reverie was broken by the approach of Mr. B——, evidently in a high state of excitement.

“Upon my word,” said he, “the conduct of those English people in the *vetturino* in front is

infamous. I never saw more gross rudeness in my life. They always, of course, arrive before us, and then make a rush to secure the best rooms. One would think their lives depended on it. Deuced ill-bred, to be sure. I wish they had not, like us, preferred the road to the rail. Why is it," continued he, in his grave way, "that English people are invariably so rude, exclusive, and selfish, and unlike any other nation? One may meet people of the first quality—French, Germans, Russians, or Italians—and always experience the very refinement of unselfish good breeding; while every wretched clerk with fifty pounds in his pocket for a fortnight's tour, every boorish cotton lord, who never in his life found himself in decent society, thinks himself justified in the most preposterous pretension. I could kick the fellows. I am ashamed of my countrymen abroad. I always say I am an American—they never behave so."

I laughed at his vehemence.

"Here we are to wait for our lunch until these people have done, just as at Arezzo. Why could we not have sat down together, and so availed ourselves *en masse* of the wretched accommodation of this wayside inn? Ah! when the republic is proclaimed in Italy—when she rises in glorious

revolution, and drives out those who now oppress her—royal tyrants, emasculate nobles, abandoned priests—when rivers of blood have been shed, and all men are made equal—then, and then only, will one be able to travel without being made the object of these degrading insults.”*

I endeavoured to calm him, but his mouth was effectually stopped by the entrance of luncheon. With a stern and disdainful air (for he was silent now, having had out his oration), he discussed the tough cutlets before us. When we left Camuscìa, I think we were both in bad humour.

The next stage is Castiglione Fiorentino, a small but ancient town, on a hill commanding a magnificent view over the immense Val de Chiana and the distant mountains beyond Perugia.

We were now approaching the Lake of Thrasymene—the scene of that awful battle which so nearly decided the fate of Rome. Thrasymene!—how the name took me back to childhood and its happy hours—to dull Roman histories, stern governesses, and Magnall’s Questions! In those days of early study (the calmest and happiest of a woman’s life certainly), that famous battle had always particularly interested me. The fatal fool-

* Such language is not exaggerated. These are the sentiments of the Reds all over Europe.

hardiness of Flaminius, in despising the hero to whom he was opposed, angered me; I almost rejoiced in his doom. I never could forgive Hannibal's want of decision in not then and there marching to the walls of Rome, and defeating the arrogant Romans.

As we advanced, the country assumed a more southern aspect; the hedges were formed of large myrtles and pomegranates, and here and there a great cactus forced its deformed branches upward to the sun's warm rays. We mounted a little rise, turned the corner of a hill, and there was the beautiful lake, thirty miles in length, spread out before us. I never beheld a lovelier view. One discusses the comparative beauty of the Swiss lakes, of Como, Maggiore, and Garda, while this enchanting inland sea is comparatively unknown.

As the carriage descended to a level with the water, we entered vast woods of ancient oak trees fringing the shores in groves and *bosquets* of wondrous beauty. Above rose the hills where Hannibal and his host lay encamped, and behind which his reserve was concealed; while the present road, as well as the railroad, follows the margin of the water, along the low ground on which the Romans advanced.

The shores are solitary, but exquisitely soft

and lovely; and as we drove mile after mile along the shore through park-like woods, I thought I had never beheld a fairer scene of Italian landscape. Two rocky islands appear, breaking the uniformity, as we near Passignano and its railway station—a most picturesquely situated town, close to the water.

On we went along the margin of the lake, through beautiful woods of majestic oak and old olive trees. The weather was lovely, warm and genial as an English July day. Not a sound disturbed the harmony of the scene—the perfumed breeze swept by without a rustle—all was peace. By-and-by the road turns off from the shores at Torricella, and ascends a mountain embowered in the same oak woods. It was so steep that oxen were necessary to drag up our heavy carriage, so we all got out to walk. Mr. B.—, under the influence of the fine scenery, grew rabid about the present condition of such a noble country, and the absolute necessity for a republic. If he had been requested at that moment to head the advancing column against the walls of Rome, I think he would have accepted with enthusiasm. His tall figure rose to its utmost height, and his stern countenance was lit by a sinister glow. His hard features, quivering under the influence of internal

agitation, gave him the air of an ancient Roman; and he only wanted the toga to transform him into a veritable republican. I spare my readers the oration he made going up that steep hill (how he had breath for it, I don't know); the conclusion of it was, that that very night he should write to Mazzini, from Perugia, and implore him no longer to delay the liberation of prostrate Italy.

From the summit of the mountain there is a magnificent view. In front stands an ancient castellated tower on a hillock of turf; below, two broad valleys open out right and left, each rifted and broken with range upon range of mountains stern and wild, extending south in long hard lines, the invariable character of Roman scenery. Here and there feudal castles frown down from rocky heights, reminding one of the days of *condottieri* and French invasions; while a few villages peep out from among the oak woods which cover all the low ground and the lower spurs of the mountain. Straight ahead appears the road to Perugia, cutting through the valley. The sun was setting in a perfect sea of saffron and gold, shooting forth long streaks of dazzling light athwart the valleys. It was a glorious scene, and reminded me of a certain landscape I remember by Domenichino, who so well understood the rich Italian tints. By-

and-by, darkness gathered rapidly over the west, the moon came out pure and bright, and, beside her, two brilliant stars that sparkled in the dark heavens.

The road now wound round the base of hills for some time, through very "brigand"-looking woods, all the deeper in shade and mystery from the lateness of the hour. I began to finger the extra napoleons in my purse rather nervously, my fears not being diminished by the exhortations of the *vetturino* to keep a sharp look-out behind for fear the boxes should be cut off the carriage. At last Perugia came in sight, grandly throned on the summit of a rock, which rises abruptly from the plain. I forgot my fears in admiration of its size and splendid position, and the stupendous Etruscan walls that gird its sides, on the very edge of the cliffs. Oxen were again necessary to drag us up to the city, which we entered through a massive gateway, formed of blocks of stone, only to be removed by Titans. A kind of boulevard conducts from the gates into the streets, planted with trees. The darkness only allowed one to guess a view beyond. Strange that so elevated a spot should have suffered severely from the plague during the middle ages, which repeatedly visited this city, and reckoned the great painter, Pietro Perugino, among its victims.

We drew up at the hotel (said to be one of the best in Italy), anticipating, with no small satisfaction, the excellent accommodation awaiting us. On the walls of the hall, and along the staircase, are inscribed the names of all the sovereigns, popes, cardinals, princes, and nobles who had slept there.

I was ushered into a most superb bedroom, evidently the state apartment reserved for kings and princes. The walls were lined with crimson damask and gold, the doors were gilt also, and painted in arabesques; and the bed—oh, how shall I describe that bed?—it was big enough for a whole generation. One disappeared among great festoons and folds of deep red velvet upheld by immense gold cornices. A small door opened close by into a dressing-closet, with an iron bedstead, which I desired to have prepared for me. Somehow I felt certain that grand room was haunted by all the potentates recorded on the stairs, and I would not have slept there for all the world.

CHAPTER VI.

Perugia—Churches—Tomb—Santa Maria degli Angeli—St. Francis—
Assisi—Foligno.

PERUGIA is a wonderful old place. Scarcely one street is level, and all the houses look as if not a brick had been touched since the Cæsars. It is the most consistently ancient city I ever saw. The very latest fashions date back three hundred years; and one feels quite relieved while contemplating something light in the Gothic palaces, after seeing the stupendous antiquity of the Etruscan walls, which certainly must have been raised by the Titans themselves long before their disgrace, somewhere in the time of Deucalion or Nox.

I proceeded from the hotel into the grand piazza, where stands the Duomo, a bold pile of Gothic splendour, raised majestically on a flight of marble steps. In the centre of the piazza is a beautiful marble fountain of exquisite workmanship, whence a perfect river gushes forth, splashing into a spacious basin beneath. Opposite is

the Palazzo Comunale—a huge double-fronted Gothic pile, partly standing in the piazza, and partly in the great street that opens from it. Here is an abundance of all the elaborate tracery and luxuriant fancy of that picturesque age. Heavily-groined arched windows, solid, yet graceful, occupy the grand story; while below, a vast portal, profusely ornamented with every detail of mediæval grotesqueness, opens into gloomy halls and staircases. At the far end of the piazza there is a dark archway, and a descending flight of steps going heaven knows where—down to unknown depths in the lower town. What a brave old square it is! Not a stone but is in keeping.

I ascended the steps and entered the Duomo, where the *coup d'œil* is very imposing, the pervading colour being that warm sunlight tint so charming to the eye. The nave, and, in fact, the whole interior, is very graceful. It is one of those buildings one can neither call large nor small, from the admirable proportions of the whole, no inequality betraying the precise scale. Frescoes there are all over the roof, and a few choice pictures; one in particular, a Deposition by Baroccio, in a chapel near the door, painted, it is said, while he was suffering from poison given him, out of envy, at Rome. This picture has the usual visit-

ing-card, common to all good paintings, of having made the journey to Paris.

Here, too, in a chapel, is preserved the veritable wedding-ring of the Virgin, which came, I suppose, flying through the air like her house at Loretto; also various other relics, all more or less fond of locomotion. In the sacristy, or winter choir, is a lovely picture, a *Sposalizio* by Luca Signorelli: in front of the figures is a tumbler of water with some carnations, painted with a delicacy of which only the old masters were capable.

The more I walked about, the more I was charmed with Perugia. Up and down we went, under old archways, and through narrow streets, each more quaint than the other. Whenever there was any opening, such views appeared—mountains tossed as if by an earthquake, deep valleys, great walls built on rocky heights, massive fortifications—all romantic beyond expression. We reached at last a plateau, called the Frontone, planted with trees, on the very edge of a stupendous cliff. The sun was just dissipating the morning mist over one of the grandest views on which the eye ever rested. Mountains, hills, rocks, of every shape and size, were piled one over the other, terrace-like; while to the right lay the blue Lake of Thrasymene, a calm and glassy mirror in the

midst of this chaotic confusion. High mountains shut in the view everywhere. In front, the rays of the sun were condensed into a golden mist, obscuring all nearer objects. To the left lay a vast plain, fat and fertile, a land flowing with milk and honey. Before us uprose the city of Assisi, sparkling in the sunshine, seated on a rocky height, and also backed by lofty Apennines.

Close by stands the curious church of San Pietro, desolate and lonely. Its form is the perfect basilica: the space over the columned nave is covered with frescoes. In the sacristy are some fine pictures—delicate Sassoferratos, elegant Pinturiccios (an artist, by the way, one learns to esteem properly at Perugia), and some Peruginos that might well pass for the works of Raphael, so clear is the colouring and so admirable the drawing. One little picture of Christ and St. John as children, painted by Raphael in his youth, is very interesting. Pale and dirty as it is, the forms are exquisite.

After we left this church we walked up a hill so steep, I decidedly expected never to get my breath again. Then a magnificent view opened out before us—as there does, indeed, from every point along the city walls. At last we came to

the Porta Augusta, one of the grandest monuments in the world. It is of immense size, and formed of uncemented stones actually gigantic; the walls of Fiesole are nothing to it. I cannot describe the solemn majesty of this portal of unknown antiquity, frowning down on the pigmy erections of later ages. There it stands in glorious solidity until the day of judgment. Nothing short of a universal convulsion can shake it. Over the arch are the letters "Augusta Perugia," looking at a distance like some cabalistic charm. On the left are an open gallery and two massive towers. It actually looks quite awful, like something seen in a dream.

Hard by it is the College of the Belle Arti, full of the most curious Etruscan relics, in wonderfully fine preservation. Whole rooms are filled with stone tombs, small, of course, in size, for the Etruscans burned their dead, preserving only their ashes. All bear recumbent figures reposing on the lid. Vases, too, there are by hundreds; and a pillar in the centre of one room is marvellously preserved. In an upper gallery are a few pictures, but of no peculiar interest. Below, a lonely botanical garden, planted with magnolias and laurel, lies—a spot in which to meditate on the strange destiny of a people capable of such wonderful

achievements in the various branches of art, leaving not a vestige of their history to posterity.

But I was obliged to rush away without ceremony; and, taking a brusque leave of the Etruscan monuments, found myself suddenly in the *cinquecento* Sala del Cambio, which is covered with beautiful frescoes by Perugino. Here he depicted prophets, philosophers, and warriors, as well as the Nativity and the Transfiguration, in an odd jumble. I confess I was not much interested in this apartment, reserving all my admiration for the chapel beyond, where there are some exquisite frescoes by Raphael—sibyls and angels indescribably beautiful; beings such as he alone could create, floating amid the most exquisite arabesque ornaments and fanciful devices. The ceiling being low, one can entirely enjoy these charming works. Here also are paintings by Perugino and Spagnoletto; but all sink into insignificance beside the inspired pencil of the great master.

After seeing the paintings at Perugia, one can estimate the influence exercised by the Umbrian schools over Italian art generally. The demand for religious pictures; the fall of the Romanesque school, caused by the wars of the middle ages; the deplorable condition of Rome—the mistress

of all civilisation—then degraded to a provincial city under the Eastern emperors, superinduced the progress of the Byzantine school all over Italy. Success in this branch of art required no creative genius, there being an accepted type for every subject, which it would have been scandalous not to follow. Art became a manufacture, and was cramped and confined into certain patterns, without drawing, form, or nature, until Cimabue, the Sienese Guido, Giotto, and their immediate followers—whom we may call Naturalisti, from their simple imitation of Nature, as distinguished from the Byzantine disregard for aught save servile copying—at last burst the bonds of custom, produced a more healthy tone, and gave an impulse in the right direction. But the naturalistic tendency of this school caused, in progress of time, a move in the other direction; and in opposition to the over-appreciation of Nature, and a tendency to represent the holiest mysteries under aspects too commonplace, arose the pietistic school of Umbria. Like the blessed Fra Angelico da Fiesole, these artists seem to have devoted their talents entirely to God, and to have made painting the subject of their most earnest prayers.

The retired and secluded position of Umbria, the small traffic her cities carried on beyond their

own province, the immediate vicinity of Assisi and her enthusiastic monks, followers of that mystical visionary St. Francis, all tended to strengthen and develop this religious school. None can look at the paintings of Pietro Perugino, Sassoferrato, or Pinturiccio without perceiving their deep enthusiasm. They are, *par excellence*, devotional pictures; the subjects are ideal in expression, and, although bearing the common human stamp, are entirely sanctified. This school reached its climax in Raphael, the pupil of Perugino, who created beings of another and a more celestial mould, around whom seemed to hover the very airs of heaven—beings too pure for either the passions or the temptations of humanity. Still, to a certain degree, this was a false tendency. What Raphael's powerful genius could command at pleasure sank with him, and soon became among his followers but tame and maudlin affectation. All that is not nature must fall; and any school of painting, however admirable, not founded on this great principle, is fated to decay. Its very merit of extreme ideality and spiritualisation contains the germs of its destruction.

Even the most cursory view of the pictures at Perugia must verify these remarks, and show the

peculiar characteristic of that school of which this city formed the centre. It would be easy to spend at least a week in this most interesting place, divided between the Etruscan antiquities, the exquisite scenery, and the paintings. I was extremely grieved to leave Perugia so soon, but there was no help for it. One church I must mention, San Dominico, which contains the grandest painted-glass windows in the choir I ever beheld—the greens, and blues, and purples brilliant beyond expression. This is the only window I ever saw comparable to those three glorious sisters at Milan, where the whole Scriptures are depicted as in a magic mirror.

The *vetturino* was at the door, and so was Mr. B——, who would not look at a single thing, being solely interested in the meat and the internal struggles of Italy. He was in a great hurry to be off, so in five minutes we were rattling through the gloomy old streets, out of the San Giovanni Gate on the road to Rome, down a tremendous descent. Fortunately for me, our driver drew up midway, about half a mile from the city, and insisted on our getting out to see a tomb called the Grotta de Volunni, forming part of the Etruscan necropolis of the city, accidentally discovered by a peasant digging for herbs in 1840.

Let none pass by this tomb. There is nothing at Chiusi or elsewhere to compare with it. We descended a long flight of steps to the entrance, once sealed by a block of stone. On the inner door-post are plainly seen Etruscan letters in red paint, informing us that this was the tomb of Arnth and Larth Velimnas. We entered the tomb. The porous, drab-coloured clay is fresh as if cut but yesterday, and still bears the high polish produced by the friction of the instruments. Everything remains exactly in the same state as when the tomb was opened, excepting some small vases, lamps, and weapons, which are removed to a museum near. There are ten mortuary chambers, the first, and largest—twenty-eight feet long—containing seven urns resting on stone shelves, with recumbent figures on the top. These urns are of marble, most artistically sculptured: one of them bears both a Roman and Etruscan inscription. The ceiling is wonderful, sunk and panelled in squares, which are gathered in the centre around a Gorgon's head, terrifically natural, and sharp and clear in outline as though just finished. There are other sculptures equally startling; one a Medusa's head placed between two swords. There are also earthenware dragons and serpents on the walls, with horrible metal tongues that

seem to hiss at one in the partial gloom. The other chambers are equally well preserved, but neither so elaborate nor so large.

It was a shame to see so wonderful and perfect a monument in a parenthesis, as it were. But so it was: we paused, exclaimed, admired, and fled; Mr. B—— loudly protesting against delay.

After about an hour's drive, a lofty church uprose before us: this was Santa Maria degli Angeli, the cradle of the great mendicant order founded by St. Francis. It is built over the original cell where he first felt those mystical inspirations to which he so strangely abandoned himself. Begging and mendicancy being inculcated as cardinal virtues by him and his followers, one could not be surprised that here both flourish gloriously. The moment our carriage stopped we were beset by about thirty men, women, and children of the most importunate description, who hovered about us like substantial gadflies. Never, even in Italy, did I see such boldness; they followed me into the church; pulled my sleeve, my hand, and all but laid violent hold upon me. As it was impossible to see anything until this crowd was disposed of, we came to a parley, declaring that we would distribute three francs among the

whole, on condition of being afterwards unmolested. This was agreed to *nem. con.*, and Mr. B—— delivered over the money to a woman sitting at a small fruit-stall, who accepted the office. Around her they instantly clustered, and such a quarrelling, screaming, and cursing began, as only Italians are capable of. One cried, another shrieked, then a couple of men began to fight, and others joining, the affair seemed likely to end in a general *mêlée*; but as the fruit-seller stood her ground firmly, they all finally cooled down, and disappeared one by one into their respective lairs. This was the practical abuse of poor St. Francis's mendicant system, he who boasted he had never refused alms to a beggar in his life!

We now turned to contemplate the noble and spacious church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, raised by the faithful over the rustic cell where St. Francis loved to offer up his devotions. Originally it was a solitary cave, where he could retire unseen by every human eye, and abandon himself to those raptures which history scarce knows whether to denominate madness or ecstatic holiness. Here he passed days, nay, even weeks, rapt in the contemplation of heavenly beatitude. On this spot, therefore, uprose the parent church

which now lends so noble a feature to the surrounding plain. It is constructed so as to enclose his original chapel and cell within its walls. The interior is perhaps too bare, from the excessive whiteness and simplicity of the massive pillars; but its size is commanding, and a noble dome rises in the centre. The present building is modern, the original church having been almost entirely destroyed in 1832 by an earthquake; which, however, respected the altar and cell of St. Francis—a circumstance his followers of course attribute to a miracle. That more sacred portion of the church is railed off and locked up. While waiting for the *sacristano*, who was at dinner, I again fell a victim to some straggling beggars in the church; especially to a woman in the pretty Romanesque costume, who pulled my cloak so perseveringly I was forced into attention. She informed me that, at the grand annual festa, ten or twelve thousand persons are frequently present, drawn from all the surrounding country by enthusiasm for the native saint. So immense, indeed, she said, was the crowd, that persons were frequently suffocated on these anniversaries. What the beggars must be on these solemn occasions I leave to the imagination of my readers; I confess myself quite at fault. At last the Franciscan bro-

ther appeared with the keys, and we entered the *penetralia* behind the screen. The deepest devotion was apparent in this man's deportment, as well as in that of others who chanced to pass us. He never mentioned the saint but in a whisper, at the same time raising his cap; and looked evidently with an annoyed and jealous eye at our intruding on the sacred precincts, heretics and unclean schismatics as we were. Near the grand altar is a small recess, where, as I understood, St. Francis died: paintings cover the walls, and a lamp burns there perpetually. The brother seemed to look on the spot with such devotion, I could not trouble him by a too impertinent curiosity.

But the most interesting portion of the building is St. Francis's cell, outside the church, in a small court at the end of a long stone passage, now converted into a chapel. Under the altar there is a deep narrow hole, visible through bars of iron, where the saint performed his flagellations, and lay as a penance for hours and days without eating or speaking. The legend goes that the instrument of flagellation was the stem of a white rose-bush, growing in a little garden hard by (still existing), and that after his blood had tinged the broken branch the tree ever after-

wards blossomed of a deep red. It is also added that a certain royal lady, within the last few years, procured a slip of this rose-tree, which, when transferred from its native soil, returned to the original colour, and became again a white rose.

As we were returning into the church, the entire brotherhood of nearly two hundred monks passed along the stone passage to the refectory, walking two and two, and singing. Their voices sounded hollow and sad as the chant echoed through the vaulted corridors. Their robes of brown serge, and their pale and downcast countenances, gave one a melancholy impression of the order. The younger monks passed first, and the sacristan desired us ladies to conceal our dangerous faces behind the door; but the rear being brought up by aged and infirm brethren, who were considered well seasoned to like temptations, we were permitted to re-enter the passage into the church. These monks, I understand, fast to an extraordinary extent, and further exercise their self-denial by sitting for a long time repeating prayers, with their scanty food spread out before them, waiting until appetite be thoroughly conquered ere they allow themselves any nourishment.

From the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, I could gaze up at the town of Assisi, grandly spread out on a mountain-chain in front, about a mile distant. This celebrated convent of St. Francis runs out like a cape, as it were, into the plains below, apart from the town, and is supported on arched foundations eighty or a hundred feet high, fixed on the solid rock, visible from a great distance, and looking like piles of clustered pillars surmounted by a majestic palace. The effect is extremely imposing. Behind rises the city, crowned by an ancient ruined castle on a green hill; while beyond, and enclosing the whole, are lofty and finely wooded mountains. Leaving our *vetturino* below, we hired a light *calèche*, and Mr. B—— and I proceeded towards Assisi. Mr. B—— was by no means a congenial companion; for he hates monks, and evinces little sympathy for mediæval art. We were straightway fastened to a couple of milk-white steers, to be dragged up the very steep acclivity on which Assisi stands, and, as the road was rough and stony, all further conversation was impossible.

As we approached, Assisi assumed a more and more singular appearance, commanding a magnificent view over the plain traversed by an-



cient aqueducts. Nothing can be more striking than the aspect of its half-ruined walls, battlements, and towers. The forsaken appearance of the streets makes it look more like a city of the dead than the living. One could easily believe the whole place had gone to sleep after the great churches were built, and never woke up again.

Up and down two or three break-neck streets, and we enter the outer *cortile*, leading to the three separate churches into which the vast pile is divided. This *cortile* is on a level with the middle church. High above rises the upper church; while below the ground on which we stand is the lower one—the burying-place of St. Francis, excavated out of the solid rock on which the artificial supports of the superstructure are built. The *cortile*, surrounded by low arched cloisters, is desolate and grass-grown. We passed through a richly-sculptured pointed arch to the left into other cloisters, which are large and airy, and covered with half-obliterated frescoes. In the centre is a deep well, full of the most lively fish. After some delay, and many desperate efforts on the part of Mr. B—— to penetrate the recesses of various dark and interminable passages into the *Clausura*, or closed part, where I, as a woman,

dared not follow, we at last laid violent hands on a Franciscan, and entreated him to show us the convent buildings.

He ushered us into the middle church, which, on the whole, is the finest and most interesting. There is a solemn, mysterious gloom about it, a "dim, religious light," that responds agreeably to one's preconceived expectations. The roof is arched, and somewhat low; and the one long single nave, with a transept at either extremity, together with the side walls and chapels, are covered with most curious frescoes. Some of the chapels were so dark that it was impossible to distinguish more than the general rich effect, but in others better lighted the paintings are fresh and brilliant, and of extreme beauty. Here are the three celebrated frescoes by Giotto, representing the virtues of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity. Poverty appears as a woman given in marriage to St. Francis. She is a sweet feminine figure, quite clothed with thorns; in front are boys mocking her, while angels hover around. By her side stands the Saviour, who is joining her hand to that of the saint. Chastity is represented by a woman in a strong fortress, surrounded by angels and hosts of mailed warriors. St. Francis advances towards her, escorted by

churchmen, and is in the act of driving away earthly or impure love. Obedience is more obscure—wrapped too deeply in emblematical allegory for me to interpret. Kugler says that tradition assigns the idea of these frescoes to Dante, who was, as appears from his “*Commedia*,” an intimate friend of Giotto’s. Every window in this beautiful church is of stained glass, lending a fine glow to its somewhat faded magnificence. The air of age and decay about the altar furniture, though harmonising with the general character of the place, surprised me much, when I considered the veneration in which these churches are universally held.

I bade a reluctant farewell to the beautiful frescoes, which would have afforded good study for many days to a lover of mediæval art; and I descended a double flight of stairs opening from the centre of the floor into the third or subterranean church. This, both in size and circular construction, recalled to me the chapel of San Carlo Borromeo, under the grand altar of the Duomo at Milan, only that the tomb of St. Francis is excavated out of the living rock. The monk and his acolyte lighted our darkness with huge torches. When visible, the third church, or rather chapel (for its size scarcely allows of calling it

anything else), is very magnificent, surrounded by a double row of yellow porphyry columns, one range encircling the rugged rock, the other surrounding the outer wall. The burial-place of the saint, under the altar, was approached by the monk with the utmost veneration; and had it not been for the withering presence of Mr. B—— (stern representative of the prejudices of the outer world) I think even I should have bent the knee before a shrine so endeared to the memories of the whole Christian world. St. Francis expired in his cell at Santa Maria degli Angeli, but his remains are interred here, where the piety of the middle ages has raised this majestic monument of sculpture, architecture, and painting—the very harvest of the period—to his name.

A very long flight of dark stairs conducted us to the upper church, which we entered somewhat abruptly near the altar. This church, which I had expected to find very splendid, disappointed me. It is bare and bald compared with the gorgeously-frescoed walls beneath; and the full glare of day through lancet windows of plain glass appeared quite profane after the solemn-tinted half-light below. The light of day, which displeases me in any church, seemed peculiarly out of place in this sanctuary, reared over the grave of one

who voluntarily shut out the outward light, and lived apart and alone, in mystical communion with heaven. The altar wants magnificence. It is surmounted by some curious Gothic arches, and enclosed by a choir, with stalls of wood-mosaics of the most wonderful beauty and finish. Here are portraits of saints and fathers, lifelike in action and expression—and a head of the Virgin, with a drapery after the manner of Bellini, which struck me as one of the sweetest countenances I had ever seen. Of the stalls there are one hundred and two; all the mosaic-work having been executed by a monk of the convent named Fra Domenico di San Severino.

This upper church is also lined with frescoes, both on the walls and ceiling—the works of Cimabue and of Giotto. The ceiling is painted in alternate compartments of figures, with gold stars on a deep blue ground; but these frescoes were exceedingly injured by the French during their occupation of Assisi. They broke the windows, admitted the rain and damp, and damaged paintings till then fresh and bright after the lapse of so many centuries. Casting my eye around on the curious frescoes, where ignorance of the canons of art and consummate genius are quaintly visible, I was caught by one of the series containing St.

Francis's life. He is represented ascending through the air to heaven in a monstrously awkward red car, little suited, certainly, for such an aërial voyage. It is shaped like the *carro* one sees commonly drawn by oxen; but this heavenly chariot is dragged over very material-looking clouds by a pair of fat Flemish horses, quite a match for the vehicle. St. Francis acts as the Jehu, holding his reins much after the style of Olympian Jove. Could he have conducted such a vehicle over infinite space, it would certainly have been the most extraordinary miracle recorded in saintly annals. There is another fresco in the same series—both attributed to Giotto—where the saint is represented in a pretty garden, surrounded by trees and verdure, preaching to little birds grouped about him, or flying to him through the air in the utmost haste. There is some water, too, introduced, and the fishes' heads are visible, poked up with an air of the utmost attention towards St. Francis, who stands in a persuasive attitude with extended arms. I suppose a smile was visible on our countenances, for the monk laughed outright at the childish conceit, and indeed throughout manifested a very decided disposition to ridicule the extravagance of the saint's miraculous gifts. "*Ah,*" said he, "*è un' allegoria, tutta questa, non è la verità!*" which

fact we scarcely required to be told. Everything connected with these paintings of Cimabue and Giotto is deeply interesting; but the more I looked, the more I was disappointed with the garish air of the upper church, and its total want of grandeur. It is, however, considered a perfect model of Gothic architecture, which, in truth, I required to be told. We made our exit by the grand portal, where there is a large wheel window, in the centre of a fine façade. We had entered below, on a level with the middle church; but, from the rapid rise of the acclivity against which the church is built, we were still on a level with the ground. We emerged on a spacious, lonely, green piazza. Beyond were the time-worn, rusty-looking walls of the town.

Here, again, we fell victims to the beggars, who, hearing that a party of *forestieri* were exploring the churches, watched us round, and came out strong and fresh on the green turf. But for Mr. B——'s tall figure and stern and somewhat morose countenance, which imposed respect, I should have been positively frightened lest the beggars in this solitary corner might not have rapidly passed into brigands and robbed me. We selected from the group an intelligent lad as a guide to our carriage, which had gone a tour on

its own account, and was nowhere visible. Up and down we trudged, through desolate, half-ruined streets, and under high walls, until I thought our guide himself was misleading us. At last we emerged on the grand piazza of Assisi, a wretched square, save and except for some noble Roman pillars and a portico fronting what once had been a temple of Minerva, now of course a church. The symmetry of this classical façade is exquisite. The columns are in a much finer state of preservation than the much-boasted Roman pillars of San Lorenzo at Milan, which were so carefully protected by Napoleon. I wonder one does not hear more of this beautiful temple, more perfect than anything at Rome, except the Pantheon.

Our *calèche* was in waiting, and we were soon rattling down the rapid descent from Assisi to Foligno, where our *vetturino* awaited us. As we descended, fine views over the plain beneath opened out from between the trees. The valley of the Tiber, which lay stretched out before us, is so richly cultivated as to be actually monotonous. Perugia was just visible in front, nobly crowning a height, encircled by rugged mountains. To the left lay Foligno and various other small towns, each town crested with dark cypresses or pine trees. Behind towered Assisi, high up in the

Apennines, crowned by its ruined fortress. After about two hours' most agreeable drive, we reached Foligno.

CHAPTER VII.

The Forum by Day—The Coliseum—Golden House of Nero and the Games of the Amphitheatre.

CONGREVE makes one of his characters declare "that his name is Truth, and that he has very few acquaintances." Had I lived nearer his time I should have thought he had an eye to me, for I have all my life steadfastly proposed to tell the truth, and have rendered myself unaccountably unpopular by so doing. I also propose to tell the truth in this rough Diary—its only merit. I will not admire a picture or a statue because Winckelmann praises it, or fall into raptures over tottering walls and clumsy pillars because they bear high-sounding names. In my character of truth-teller I propose to visit the Roman Forum. Now, I am certain that no human being ever visited that far-famed valley of glory and misery, *for the first time*, without positive disappointment; only people will fly into high-flown raptures—raptures in which, indeed, I would willingly join,

were association *alone* the question. But the Forum in broad daylight is in reality a bare, dusty, bald-looking place, with very little to see *at all*, so entirely are all vestiges of its former magnificence destroyed. The Capitoline Hill, crowned by the modern Campidoglio, built over the remains of the Tabularium, stands on a gentle eminence, and presents all the incongruities of the back of an unfinished building. The windows and the walls might belong to any other house, and be considered rather untidy and incomplete; and the small bell-tower in the centre of the roof would appropriately crown a Dissenting meeting-house. Below, among the foundations, yawn some arches formed of uncemented blocks, and solid masses of stonework in deep-down pits, of which there is just sufficient to recall their fabulous antiquity and to remind us that in those vaults were religiously preserved the Sibylline books, consulted when there was "anything rotten in the state" of Rome.

Very much below the modern road crossing the Forum, on which I take my stand, deep excavations under the base of the hill display the remains of various temples, masses of stone, former foundations, capitals, and broken marble pillars, crowded heterogeneously about the still remaining

upright pillars, of which there are not a dozen standing, and those, to the eye of a rationalist, piled in such confusion, that, without the aid of books and antiquarian theories, it would be impossible to trace out any imaginable disposition or arrangement. No spot in the world has so fruitfully employed the learned pens of antiquaries; and because it is a Sphinx-riddle no god will reveal, everybody, with equal reason, calls them by a new name—Canina, Murray, Niebuhr, Braun, all employ their own nomenclature—which imposes the scandal of endless *aliases* on the venerable ruins. At first I was so confused that I never called them by any name; for I was sure to be wrong whatever I said, and to stand corrected, though I might, had I loved disputations, have held my ground, having made antiquity my constant study.

These temples, then, which must have stood inconveniently close together, are a vexation and a confusion. To the left, on the Tarpeian Rock, where once stood the citadel and the temple of Juna Moneta, houses and courts, dirty, black, and filthy, crowd upon each other. The republican government of ancient Rome, after the stern sentence passed on Manlius, razed his house, and forbade that henceforth any private dwelling

should be erected on the Capitol or the citadel. But the long course of ages appears to have weakened this decree; for a fashionable antiquary once arranged a little roost on the forbidden ground, under the shadow of the Prussian eagle, whose embassy is also perched precisely on the site of the ancient citadel on the Tarpeian Rock. No rock, however, is to be seen. The elevation is very slight, save on one side (overlooking the Piazza del Torre di Specchio), "the Traitor's Leap," where a man might still break his ankle-bone perhaps if he tried, and certainly would die of the suffocating atmosphere and bad smells of the neighbourhood. A steep road descends on this side into the Forum, a valley, oblong in shape, extending about seven hundred and fifty feet, and on the further side of the Campidoglio a flight of steps also leads downwards.

Beyond the Campidoglio a second hill, corresponding with the elevation of the citadel, indicates the site of the once famous temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, now replaced by the formless and really hideous church of the Ara Cœli, a mass of brown stones, like an architectural chaos, "without form and void;" but the accumulated earth still faithfully evidences where once stood the magnificent temple. Descending from hence the

flight of steps towards the Forum, the Arch of Septimius Severus is passed, a perfect and striking monument covered with basso-relievi, and bearing an inscription, where the name of Geta is plainly wanting, having been erased by the fratricide Caracalla, after he became emperor. Standing as it does, however, in an excavation, on a level with the temples, the arch is so low and deeply sunk that it appears utterly shorn of its proportions and dignity. Beneath, and passing through it, some large blocks of stone, once forming part of the Clivus Capitolinus, are still visible. The position of the Forum is indicated by a large square excavation, more remarkable for its filth than for the minute remains of broken columns visible—remains conveying neither dignity nor interest to the uninformed eye. Another and a smaller excavation, strewn with fragments of capitals, blocks of marble, and the remains of a few more pillars, include *all* pertaining to the Forum and Comitium now visible; and it is by means of books alone, and deep research and antiquarian knowledge, aided by strong powers of imagination, that we can build up these arcades, reconstruct these temples, and lend form, symmetry, and splendour to a scene positively repulsive in its actual appearance. Nothing can be

more modern than the general aspect of the buildings—mostly churches—erected on the traditional sites of the pagan temples bordering the sides of the Forum. The modern Romans seemed to have proposed to themselves in their erection to wage the most determined war against any stray memories which might be evoked by the least vestige of ancient remains. Walls, pillars, and porticoes are ruthlessly built into the present structures, themselves as commonplace and uninteresting as whitewash and stucco can make them.

Proceeding along what was once the "Sacred Way," now a very dusty modern road, first in order appears the church of San Giuseppe of the Carpenters, its façade gaily painted with coarse frescoes. It is built over the Mamertine prisons, which I shall visit later.

Next comes the church of Santa Martina, which is connected with the Accademia di San Luca. It is said to be built on the spot where once stood a temple to Mars, or, as some say, the "Secretarium Senatus." Martina, a noble Roman virgin who heroically sacrificed her life to the Christian faith, now triumphs in death within a richly decorated tomb, in her subterranean church at the foot of that Capitol whose steps her an-

cestors so often mounted as conquerors, senators, and priests.

The adjoining church of San Adriano is supposed to mark the site of the Basilica *Æmilia*, built in the time of Augustus; a portion of the front, formed of bricks, is all that remains.

Immediately following is the church of SS. Cosimo e Damiano, twin brothers, born in Arabia, who finally suffered martyrdom under Diocletian after twice miraculously escaping from the sea and the stake. These brothers were canonised, as it would seem, by the Catholic Church, to recall the popular worship of Romulus and Remus (on whose ruined temple the church was erected) under a Christian aspect. The magnificent mosaic of the apsis—one of the most perfect in the world—divides attention with the remnants of the original temple, now consecrated as a second and subterraneous church.

The church of San Lorenzo in Miranda is faced by an ancient portico composed of ten imposing though much injured Corinthian columns, now deprived of half their original height, and unmercifully squeezed by the façade of the insignificant modern church, bearing on a frieze an inscription showing the ancient temple to have been dedicated to the “divine Antoninus and

Faustina." This portico was excavated during the visit of the Emperor Charles V. to Rome.

Standing somewhat back from the line we have hitherto followed are the three huge arches of an immense ruin formerly known as the Temple of Peace. Many descriptions have come down to us of this stately monument. The roof was incrustured with gilt bronze, and supported by stupendous columns; the interior was enriched with the finest statues and pictures of the Grecian schools. Here were deposited the spoils brought from Jerusalem by Titus, forming a vast public treasury.

Besides the three arches of this majestic ruin, now bare and stripped to the brick walls, all that remains in evidence of its former splendour is one beautiful Corinthian column, cruelly removed from the spot and placed in front of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. It was originally one of the eight exquisite marble pillars which decorated the interior temple. In these latter days the ruin is known as the Basilica, begun by Maxentius, and finished by Constantine, after the battle of Ponte Molle had ended that tyrant's life and reign. According to the present version we must consider this lofty structure only as belonging to "modern Rome," for in that interminable chain of centuries that unlink before one in ex-

amining the historic antiquities of Rome, the third or fourth century counts but as yesterday. I for myself prefer the Catholic account, as being the most poetic. According to that, this edifice was built by Augustus in memory of the peace given to the world by the battle of Actium. Wishing to know how long the solid walls would stand, he consulted the oracle, which replied, "*Quoadusque virgo pariat*" ("Until a virgin bears a son"). The Romans considered this a promise of immortality, and anticipated an eternal existence for the new Temple of Peace; but the same night that saw the Saviour's birth in Bethlehem, the walls of the pagan temple shook and fell; fire suddenly and mysteriously issued from the ground, and the sumptuous pile was consumed.

The modern church of Santa Francesca Romana is built on part of the remains of the temple of Venus and of Rome, designed by the Emperor Adrian, forming one angle of the long-shaped square which marks the valley of the Forum. It is a curious coincidence that on the site of the former temple of "Venus the Happy," Catholic Rome should have dedicated a church to the memory of a Roman matron renowned for her rigid virtue.

Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history,

furnishes us with a curious fact in connection with this church. He assures us that the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul visited Rome—an historic fact my own rampant Protestantism, on first arriving at Rome, made me culpably doubt. He recounts that the magician, Simon Magus, had preceded them there, and, in order to neutralise their preaching, gave himself out as a god. The Emperor Nero admired him, and statues were already raised to his honour. In order to give a convincing and visible proof of his divinity, the impostor announced that he would publicly raise himself in the air without assistance, and selected the theatre of Nero's golden house as the spot where the proposed prodigy was to take place. All Rome assembled in expectant wonder, and the emperor himself was present in the vestibule of his palace; but St. Peter, who had arrived in Rome unknown to Simon Magus, was also there; and as the magician mounted boldly into mid-air, the Apostle knelt down and prayed earnestly that his blasphemy might be punished. As the arrow flies from the bow, so was the Apostle's prayer heard and answered. Simon suddenly fell to the earth and was killed, and the stone on which St. Peter knelt retained the impression of his knee, and is visible now in the interior of the church,

on the very spot where it is said his prayers were offered—"Una cosa," as the Italians say, "*di gran divozione.*"

Situated on slightly rising ground stands next in order the beautiful Arch of Titus, on a level with the present surface, and therefore seen to much better advantage than its opposite neighbour, the sunken Arch of Septimius Severus. The basso-relievi are remarkably clear and distinct, and the sculptures on the arch indicate a period before the decline of art. On the inner side of the arch, Titus appears in basso-relievo, seated in a triumphal car, conducted by the Genius of Rome, and attended by Victory crowning him with laurels; opposite are the spoils of the Temple—the table of shew-bread, the seven-branched candlestick, the jubilee trumpets, and the incense vessels.

The Jews from the dirty Ghetto never cease to contemplate this monument with profound sorrow and violent indignation. They hate the Romans, past, present, and to come, as the devastators of that shrine, more glorious, in their imagination, than the burnished pillars of the golden sun supporting the opening vaults of morning! A Jew would rather die than pass under that arch, which accounts for the little foot-paths formed on either side. But it is in vain to



dispute the Almighty will; the monument of their servitude is not to be ignored, nor the prophecy forgotten which was wrung from our Lord by the hard impiety of the Jewish nation—"Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Continuing my tour round the modern Forum, the steep sides of the Palatine Hill now break the view, rising abruptly aloft, dark, ominous, and gloomy—a hillside on which grow no flowers, where the sun never shines, desolate and uninhabited, broken into deep chasms, and scattered over with huge fragments—broken terraces and shattered arches heaped on each other in indescribable confusion. Grass and reeds, low shrubs and twining vines, overmantle the sombre ruins, and on the summit of the hill rises a sacred wood of evergreen trees, fit diadem for its frowning brow. There is a repulsive grandeur about the stern decay of the Palatine; and, though crumbling into dust, far more exciting to my imagination than the cheerful, sunny, modernly-built, and thickly-populated quarter of the Capitoline Mount, where the past wrestles in vain with the present, and loses all dignity in the encounter.

Under the Palatine a large space of muddy, uneven ground marks the place where the cattle-

market is held; for (O horrid sacrilege!) not only its dignity but its very name has passed away, and the ancient Forum is now only known to the degenerate modern Romans by its designation of "*Campo Vaccino!*"

At all times are to be seen here herds of slate-coloured oxen—meek, quiet-looking beasts with enormous horns, ruminating beside the frame-carts they draw—and ferocious buffaloes, bending their heads indeed under the yoke, but always rolling around their vicious, untamed eyes. Also Velletri wine-carts, drawn by single horses, with odd one-sided hoods or screens, to shield the driver from the sun and rain, which hood contains often a cross and a small image of the Madonna, to say nothing of a little store of knives, forks, bottles, and pistols. The drivers, with their pointed hats and sunburnt handsome faces, are now resting beside these original conveyances, side by side with the *contadini* belonging to the oxen—dull, stolid-looking barbarians, who seem to live only to drink and to sleep. There they all rest in picturesque groups (for somehow or other the *pose* of the most common and clownish Italian is always picturesque) under the dark shadow of the Palatine.

Further on, where now stand the churches of

Santa Maria Liberatrice and San Teodoro (San Toto), the Curia Julia, first called Curia Hostilia, was situated, built by Julius Cæsar, and embellished by Augustus, being the place where he convoked the senate. In the centre, on the side of the house built for Valerius Publicola by a grateful people, stood a statue and temple of Victory, while near it was held the slave-market of ancient Rome—that numerous and accursed race, which so often threatened, murdered, and oppressed their haughty masters, intriguing on the very steps of the throne, and sacrificing even the lives of the deified Cæsars to their lust of power, foul passions, and extravagant caprices. The temple of Vesta stood in this part of the Forum, and the Spoliarium of Sylla, a human slaughter-house, daily filled during his dictatorship with the heads of illustrious senators and patricians. Aloft, extending from hill to hill, stretched a bridge constructed by the insane Caligula, in order to enable the deified monster to pass from the imperial palace on the Palatine to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Capitol without crossing the Forum. Of all these structures no vestige remains.

The church of San Toto (behind the Roman Forum, on the way to the Forum Boarium) stands on the supposed site of the *Lupercal*, where, says

Shakespeare's Mark Antony, in his famous oration over the body of Cæsar, "I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse." At hand stood, in early times, the temple of Romulus, on the spot where the twin brothers were discovered by the shepherd.

To the formation of the Cloaca Maxima, and other contrivances for draining the marshy ground between the Palatine, Aventine, and Capitoline Hills, must be attributed the altered current of the Tiber, now full a quarter of a mile distant from the traditionary spot where the cradle containing the Alban twins touched the shore. The river being much swollen, the cradle dashed against a stone at a place called Arnanum, and was overturned. The cries of the infants frightened away the shepherds, but attracted the she-wolf by which they were tended until Laurentia, the wife of Faustulus, first saw and bore them to her hut near the Velabrum. The whole story, says Dionysius, was in his day recorded in bronze, in a grotto dedicated to Pan, near a wood also dedicated to the sylvan deities, on the way to the Circus Maximus.

The modern church of San Toto affords little interest. It lies much below the level of the present road leading towards the Aventine, and,

darkly overshadowed by the ruins on the summit of the Palatine, wears a sombre aspect. In a *cortile* before the entrance appear some slight remains of an altar; but otherwise the church, which is circular, and about the same size as the temple of Vesta, has a provokingly modern air; especially the interior, glaringly painted and vulgarly decorated. Miraculous powers are supposed to belong to this church, where the modern Roman *canaglia* to this day constantly bring new-born infants whose lives are in danger. In like manner, ancient Romans are known to have believed that the temple of Romulus possessed miraculous powers of healing infants. Strange contradiction! while close at hand lay the sombre lake of the Velabrum, on whose marshy shores the offspring of illicit love, the children of slaves, and the weak and deformed infants of both patricians and plebeians, were barbarously exposed to perish.

San Teodoro, to whom the church is now dedicated, was a military martyr, soldier of Maximian. He suffered martyrdom for setting fire to a temple where the sight of some obscene pagan rite roused his indignation. When asked by the magistrate why he had so acted, he replied, "I am a Christian, and should do the like again." He was torn with iron pincers until his veins and

muscles were laid bare and he expired. His church is opposite that of Santa Martina, on the other side of the Forum. Thus the Christian soldier and the patrician virgin, both martyrs, stand glorious sentinels at the entrance of this classic valley.

The last of the churches surrounding the Forum is the small and quite modern church of Santa Maria Liberatrice, which, gay in whitewash and colours, certainly does not recall by its aspect the temple of Vesta built by Numa, whose site it occupies.

I have now completed the circuit of the modern Forum, and described it as at present it appears. If the heroic deeds of Roman history rendered this ground and these ruins famous, Christian fortitude and heavenly virtues have also set on them an indelible and immortal imprint. Many of that glorious army of martyrs who stand beside the great white throne, holding their crowns and singing eternal hosannas to the blessed Three, once traversed the Forum, passing along the "Sacred Way" to win their cross within the walls of the Flavian Amphitheatre. They, too, gazed on these stately buildings and lofty palaces as they took their last look on the outward world. Many Ro-

man martyrs were of exalted rank, and claimed friends and relatives among the stern senators sitting on the curule chairs under the long-drawn colonnades. The Christian history of Rome yields neither in heroism, devotion, dramatic incident, thrilling interest, nor unflinching stoicism to the much-studied pagan annals.

I returned into the Forum. The afternoon was now come, together with a heterogeneous crowd lounging about in all directions. The modern Romans are easily recognisable as they slowly saunter along, wholly regardless of the celebrated scene of their ancestors' greatest triumphs. No wonder: they simply consider it as a dirty space devoted to the sale of cattle. We are not given to studying English history in Smithfield; and to them the Forum presents as few attractions. As decidedly are the English recognised by their trivial and restless curiosity, the questions they ask, and the ignorance they betray, Carriage after carriage may be seen driving up, and party after party of extravagantly-dressed ladies may be seen dismounting in the dirt at various points of peculiar interest, only to peep and peer about as did the famous Davis for pickles in the vases of Pompeii. The vexatious mass of nameless temples particularly engages their attention, and they stand,

"Murray" in hand, resolutely decided on understanding what is not understandable. When I see these antiquarian butterflies, attended generally by a servant in livery and a pet spaniel, I confess I am disgusted. Here and there a quiet, unassuming party of plainly-dressed Germans appear, industriously working their way along, really seeming to approach the place in a right spirit of earnest inquiry; or some solitary traveller, *en grande barbe*, smoking a cigar—sure to be a French *savant*—evidently absorbed and overwhelmed by the rich tide of recollections rising around. A long procession of *frati*, enveloped in black robes and hoods, streams along towards the Coliseum, carrying a large black cross, chanting sad and dismal hymns that echo harmoniously amid the fallen and decaying precincts of the past. Americans abound, active, talkative, and unsympathetic. What sympathy can youth have with decrepitude?—the enterprising young world, springing into life and greatness (rejoicing in liberty and freedom), with the mouldering remains of former tyrants? But whether they come to *say* they have seen, or in reality to worship art at the fallen altars of false gods, they come kindly, Christianly. Neither *morgue*, reserve, nor pride marks their manners; nor do they affect the exclusive indifference of





that young English lady who, visiting the Forum for the *first time*, is seated in her carriage deeply engaged in reading the *Times*.

I was invited the other night by Lady Anne St. G—— to go with her to see the Coliseum lit up with coloured lights, in honour of some French notabilities just arrived at Rome. I thought it sounded very barbarous; but I went. It was a lovely evening in May, that most charming of all months in an Italian climate. The Coliseum rose before us, serenely beautiful in the mournful moonlight, breathing a monumental melancholy which was absolutely pathetic. Those almost articulate walls possess an unspoken eloquence intelligible to the wanderers of all lands. Like the old Memnon statue, they breathe out music; a chord, a note, a thought, a memory, strikes home, and an undying recollection is borne away in every heart. At this season the great ruin is enveloped in delicious groves; beautiful walks are formed around it, planted with graceful acacia trees, the branches, now weighed down by snowy blossoms, perfuming the night air almost oppressively. As we strolled about the gigantic ruins and up and down the moonlit arcades, unspeakable hope and peace came into my soul. Angels seemed to look down from the star-sown heavens,

and the spirits of slaughtered saints to sanctify the scene of their martyrdom. Looking at the moon, clear and argentine as a silver mirror, the ills and troubles of this life faded away like a vain and troubled dream. I rejoiced that God had made the world so fair, and had permitted me thus to enjoy it. Oh! it was well with me on that peaceful night, and with so congenial a companion as walked beside me! She, being a devout Catholic, contemplated the scene with a religious enthusiasm in which I could scarcely join. She recalled to me that curious prophecy recorded by the Venerable Bede, as repeated by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims of his day:—

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls—the world!”

Standing under the black shadows, cutting the ground with almost palpable lines, how clear and bright shone out the snowy walls—beautiful as some fairy palace built for a magician’s bride, and soft and mellow as the heavens above! This partial light, half concealing, half displaying interminable successions of arches, led the eye through mysterious vistas marked here and there by an oblique ray of moonlight, on to the central space, where altars, and mouldering galleries, and

terraced colonnades swam in a sea of subdued splendour. From the Baths of Titus, on a rising ground near by, a wood of pomegranates descended towards the Coliseum, and we could just discern the thousand crimson flowers among the rich dark leaves. To the right, buried in deep shadow, rose the Arch of Constantine. Through the three arches that pierce its massive façade the moon cast long lines of brightness on the ruined mass of the once brilliant fountain of the Meta Sudans, where, through a perforated column surmounted by a colossal statue of Jupiter, an abundant stream descended into a vast marble basin for the use of the athletes and gladiators of the amphitheatre. Close by, a few rough stones indicate the pedestal where stood this colossal statue that gave its name to the beauteous structure. After decorating the golden house of Nero, it was removed by Vespasian to this amphitheatre, which he was then erecting at the extremity of the Via Sacra, and transformed into the image of Apollo. Stupendous rays of glory surrounded the head. Adrian removed it a second time, and Commodus changed it into a likeness of himself. The golden house of Nero and the Coliseum! What a whole history lies in those names;—what deeds—what emperors—what saints—what crimes uprose! Where we

now stood in the peaceful moonlight a lake once existed; and, surrounding its shores, that golden palace of Nero, which was a city in itself. Not satisfied with the already overgrown palace on the Palatine, which had contented other Cæsars, and also finding his abode at the Vatican too small, he extended his new palace over the entire area of the Esquiline (Santa Maria Maggiore), the Cœlian (San Giovanni Laterano), and the Palatine, within which it was connected by a bridge. Within its walls were "expansive lakes and fields of vast extent, intermixed with pleasing variety; woods and forests stretched to an interminable length, presenting gloom and solitude amidst scenes of open space, where the eye wandered with surprise over an unbounded prospect."* The palace itself stood in the centre of this elysium, colossal in proportion and fabulous in splendour. The Temple of Peace, of prodigious height, formed the vestibule, surrounded by a triple range of columns of the most exquisite marble. From the vestibule opened the *atrium*, a hall of extraordinary magnificence, gorgeous with statues, paintings, ivory, mosaics, marbles, and gold, large enough to serve for the assembly of the senate, when it suited the caprice of the tyrant to gather

* Tacitus.

them there. A splendid portal opened on the lake; Suetonius says "it was like a sea surrounded with palaces," which its waters doubled in reflecting. Opposite the portal was placed the colossal statue of Nero, one hundred and twenty feet high, a statue whose subsequent vicissitudes I have mentioned. Deified during his life, his image was surrounded by a golden nimbus, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, Nero exacted divine honours in his own palace. The ceilings of the different halls were covered with plates of gold, set off by diamonds and precious stones; the walls were decorated with gilding and the most exquisite paintings and statues: the floors inlaid, as with costly embroidery, with those unrivalled mosaics of which many specimens taken from contemporary ruins still remain. The *triclinium*, or eating-room, was surrounded by turning panels of ebony incrustated with ivory, from whence flowers and perfumes descended on the guests, who lay extended on couches spread with roses and myrtles, wearing garlands of odoriferous flowers. All that earth, sea, or air furnished most rare and delicate, was served up in vases of gold and silver, sometimes to the number of twenty-two different courses. Several slaves were placed near each guest, some to fan him, and some to chase away

the flies with branches of myrtle. Musicians filled the air with delicious symphonies, and troops of young children executed voluptuous dances, accompanied by the merry clatter of the castanets. Anon the walls folded away like a screen, and displayed a theatre, where the sight of the gladiators' bloody combats gave the last *gusto* to the banquet; they were even introduced into the very room, and slew each other in the imperial presence. Sometimes the entertainment was varied by combats of men and animals. Artificial groves surrounded the lake, where, among the branches, silver birds of the finest workmanship represented peacocks, swans, and doves. The baths presented every refinement of luxury. They glittered with gold, silver, marble, and fresco mosaic, and were often used three times in one day.

Within these halls of fabulous luxury did the voluptuous Nero—the tyrant, comedian, and poet—abandon himself to every vice; he sang, he wrestled, he drove chariots, he shed torrents of innocent blood. Here his passion kindled for Poppæa, during the lifetime of the innocent Octavia, who expiated the crime of having thwarted the monster's caprice by her speedy banishment and murder in the island of Pandataria. Poppæa's voice, which had often waked the echoes

of these golden halls by her violent reproaches, was heard no more upbraiding; in becoming empress, she was satisfied. *Cui bono?* She in her turn soon fell a victim to Nero's cruelty.

Here died Britannicus, poisoned while his brother's guest at one of these epicurean banquets; and here did Nero meditate the murder of his mother Agrippina—a crime so unnatural that it even startled the depraved and brutalised Romans! And what remains of this imperial pomp? A few stones and rubbish, the ruined pedestal where once stood the colossal image, and some deep-buried subterraneous chambers filled with bricks and lime. The neighbouring Baths of Titus were built over part of the golden house—and why? Because the memory of Nero was so execrated that Rome considered it a scandal and a disgrace to allow one stone to rest upon another of the palace which had sheltered him.

Then there came a great change over that world-stage. A notable act was finished in the universal drama, and the curtain of oblivion fell on many actors. When it again rose a new dynasty sat on the throne of the Cæsars, and victories and triumphs, the glory of the Roman eagles and the iron bravery of the legions, filled the heart of the great city with joy.

Where had stood the golden house appeared now two remarkable objects—the Arch of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre. Later came the Arch of Constantine, forming a mystic triangle, standing as it were on the confines of ancient and modern Rome, symbolising Judaism and its conquest, paganism and its crimes, and Christianity bringing down heaven to earth in its angelic creed.

The mighty Coliseum standing before me was raised on a theatre of blood, and faithful to the traditions of the former palace, amid blood and tears, sorrow and despair, did those gigantic walls arise under the hands of the Jews brought captive by Titus from Jerusalem. Thousands and tens of thousands lay them down to die, wearied out and faint, beside their labour: for, incredible though it seems, the vast pile was certainly completed in *ten*, if not, according to some authorities, in *four* years.

Never were the four orders of architecture so harmoniously combined as in these arched walls, on which the shadows now fall so heavily in the moonlight. Successive masses of gloom indicate some of the many entrances, of which there are eighty, all numbered except one—the imperial ingress opposite the Palatine Hill, where was a subterranean passage constructed by Commodus, in which he was very nearly assassinated.

Among these openings one was named *Sandapilaria*, or *Libitinalis*; the other, *Sanavivaria*. Near the former was the *Spoliarium*, where the bodies of men and beasts killed on the arena were thrown pell-mell; an awful charnel-house, which must have overflowed when imperial Titus inaugurated his amphitheatre by games which lasted one hundred days, and five thousand wild beasts and many thousand gladiators were killed.

Waiting for the arrival of the company, we had quietly paced round and round the Coliseum. I devoutly hoped they would not come, but at last, after a long space, Count Z—— and a whole tribe of French ladies made their appearance. The French Zouave at first positively refused to let us enter.

“*On ne passe pas par ici*,” echoed through the colonnade.

“*Comment!*” cried one of his countrywomen; “*vous êtes Français et si peu galant? Mon Dieu!*” added she, turning to Count Z——; “*c’est qu’il faut qu’il y ait bien longtemps qu’il a quitté la France!*”

Count Z—— expostulated in Italian, talking as rapidly as Figaro, declared he had a *permesso*, got furious and excited, and swore classical oaths; but it was all of no use. The musket still barred

the entrance, and the man was immovable. To be sure, it was enough to anger any one less excitable than an Italian, to have invited a large party there and not to be able to get in. Count Z—— rushed frantically about, clutching his hair, and looking quite melodramatic, with his Spanish cloak draped around him. At last the *scena* ended in our favour by the appearance of the custode from within, who at once cleared the way.

“*Mon ami,*” said the French lady to the Zouave as she passed him, “*souvenez-vous toujours qu’un Français doit faire partout place aux dames.*”

The Coliseum by moonlight is very beautiful; a dim mysterious look hangs about the walls half sunk in deepest gloom, half revealed in the clear moonlight; yet I cannot say that to me it appeared more impressive than by day, though certainly more poetical. I had gone with a vague, undefined idea of something wonderful, and I was disappointed. The coloured lights were barbarous, and made the venerable ruin look like a scene in an extravaganza. One fine effect was produced by placing large torches of pitch under a series of arches in the upper stories, bringing out grandly every over-arching line and pillar, even the long grass trailing in the breeze, while all the foreground was buried in gloom. For my own

part, I prefer the Coliseum as I have seen it on a Friday afternoon, when the black penitents are grouped around the altars and about the central cross, mingled with groups of Roman women in their picturesque dresses, all kneeling in various attitudes of deep devotion, a mellow wintry sun lighting up the whole.

While the French ladies, attended by the now radiant count, raced about the galleries, appearing and disappearing among the arches in the red and blue lights, like a *sabbat* of witches, I sat down on the steps of the black cross planted in the centre of the arena, and fell to rebuilding and repeopleing those mighty galleries.

The space around is deep in sand, and lions, panthers, and bears roar in their barred cages on a level with the arena. The imperial door (which bears no name engraven on it) opens, and the emperor enters, gorgeously appavelled in the imperial purple, wearing on his head a crown of gold. He is followed by the court, also in magnificent apparel, brilliant as stars, but of inferior magnitude. Next following are the vestal virgins, robed in white draperies and purple mantles, and the senate arrayed in white togas with embroidered borders of gold. These all take their places on the lowest gallery, the *podium*, protected by a

golden network. Eighty-seven thousand spectators pour in, and fill those upper ranges of seats in an instant, as if by magic; the matrons and virgins, resplendent in scarlet, purple, gold, and diamonds, forming a brilliant circle apart from the darker-robed men.

After the sacrifices, which always preceded the games, martial music thunders forth, and the gladiators appear, ranging themselves in two parallel lines, bearing whips with which they scourge the wretched *bestiarii*, who in a long line pass between them—slaves, prisoners, Christians, children, women, and old men—all devoted to die in the coming games. Preceded by a herald, the gladiators now pass in procession round the amphitheatre, bowing to the emperor, and exclaiming, "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" ("Cæsar, those about to die salute thee"). But the opening ceremonies are tedious to the impatient plebs, who roar and cry in the upper galleries, and will wait no longer, so *the vestals* give the signal to begin. The grated doors are raised, and the wild beasts rush like a hurricane over the arena—a hurricane that rains blood; for see in a moment the arms, legs, heads, and entrails that cover the sand! Troop after troop of *bestiarii* appear—the excitement is inflamed to madness—emperor, people, women,

vestals, gloat upon the sight of blood, and applaud and incite the hideous carnage. The *bestiarii* being all despatched, the attendants drag off the bodies into the Spoliarium: one of them is called Mercury, the other Pluto, and they bear the attributes of these divinities. Mercury touches the dying with a red-hot iron, and Pluto gives the *coup de grâce*. Handsome slaves, elegantly dressed, appear and rake over the sand to obliterate the traces of blood, while ingeniously-contrived gratings exude showers of perfumes over the amphitheatre. The *velarium* at the top, arranged so as to exclude the sun, undulates with an artificial movement, serving as a great fan or gigantic ventilator, while songs and symphonies are accompanied by an harmonious orchestra, and buffoons and tumblers amuse the audience.

But see! the gladiators mounted on splendid cars appear, and driving round, again salute the emperor. "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" resounds in chorus. They are dressed in short red or white tunics, with cinctures of worked leather: and each man bears a small shield, a trident, and a net. Some, however, have only a larger shield and others carry a noose, or are armed with swords. They are mostly Gauls by birth, and are to fight both on horseback and on foot suc-

cessively, one troop after another, to vary the games by their particular modes of combat. Some there are, *sine missione*, self-doomed to death, and this fact has been duly noticed on the *manifesti* in order to draw more company. The trumpets sound—the fight has begun! The swords cross—lances meet—and blood again flows in copious streams. Yet the people grumble and hiss—death is too sudden; the combatants are to eke out life by wounds to the utmost moment—not to strike and kill. “There is no amusement in seeing a man die,” shouts one. “They are cowards, these gladiators,” cries another. “They want to live,” roars a third; but “They shall die,” sounds all around. And die they shall, for their life rests on the *vox populi*, and that is now raised in horrid yells and shouts, hoarse as with blood. The spectators rise *en masse*—the vestals, too, stretch forth their arms, and threaten with gestures worthy of the Furies, terrible, convulsive—the wretched gladiators are doomed, and fall to a man. Fresh gladiators appear, and are more prodigal of their blood; and as hideous wounds are inflicted, the cry “*Habet!*” or “*Hoc habet!*” flies round. Perhaps when one, who has fought nobly and interested the audience, is about to receive a death-blow, the thumb is *raised*, as the almost dying

gladiator appeals to the people, and he is spared. If the thumb be *lowered*, it is the sign of instant death, and the gladiator, holding in his hand the sword of his adversary, must direct the point against his own throat.*

This is a glorious exhibition, and each time it occurs maddens the whole audience with delight. The vestals, more furious than the one-breasted Amazons of yore, clap their hands with frantic applause, and the whole amphitheatre thrills with transports of savage excitement. Three times have the handsome slaves cleared the arena; three times the odoriferous perfumes have descended. The combats of man to man are over for this day, but yet the audience is not contented—more blood must flow; blood always, but with a variety. Some richly-dressed slaves appear with a brazier of burning coals. What can this signify? The people have heard of the heroic fortitude of Mutius Scævola, but have not seen it; the degenerate descendants of the ancient Romans desire to behold represented the very act of their republican ancestor. A man advances into the midst of the arena, dressed in a *tunica incendialis* of sulphur; a lighted torch is held on each side; if he moves

* See note in Preface.

he burns; and in this position he parodies Mutius, and his right hand is burnt off! *Bestiarii* are again dragged forth, while, moving from the principal entrance, appear artificial mounds covered with trees, shrubs, and herbage; suddenly their sides collapse, and lions, bears, panthers, and bisons rush into the arena. The carnage recommences—blood again scents the air, and men and animals sink down on the sand in hideous death embraces. At last no more victims are left. A few savage animals remain masters of the field, and quietly sit down to crack the human bones around them.

Thus perished St. Ignatius, the Christian bishop, sent from the far East expressly to die in the Roman amphitheatre. He kneels in the midst of the arena, and the eyes of a hundred thousand spectators are bent upon him. "I am the Lord's wheat," exclaimed he, "and I must be broken by the teeth of the beasts before I can become the bread of Jesus Christ." While he yet speaks, two lions fling themselves upon him, and in a moment nothing is left but a few large bones. Armies of martyrs perished within these walls—perished by a like death, and died rejoicing—Eustace, and the Virgins Martina, Tatiana, and Prisca; Julius and Marius and the rest—whose spirits now re-

joice in glory. Oh, sublime and immortal idea of the Catholic Church to consecrate this detested spot, and plant a cross in the centre! "*In hoc signo vici.*" Here indeed is the Cross triumphant!

CHAPTER VIII.

The Forum and the Capitol by Night—"In Memoriam"—Villa Borghese—Making a Saint—Museum—San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

THE French ladies were charmed with the coloured lights, and were having a game of hide-and-seek with the count in the lower gallery. Every one was talking. I pined for solitude, and wandered off along the Sacred Way towards the Forum. Once out of reach of the ladies' shrill voices, not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the night. The moon, yet high in the heavens, cast down her "dim religious light;" the stars shone out, leading the mind to other worlds, more glorious perchance than our own; the night breezes blew softly by, heavy with perfume.

Opposite to me, on a low hill, stood a lonely portico, its altar broken and its statue gone, once forming part of the magnificent temple designed and built by Adrian, and dedicated to Venus and to Rome. A forest of stately arcades on either side united the double portico elevated on marble

steps, conceived by the imperial architect as an improvement on the design of the famous Apollodorus, whose skill had roused his envy, and whose life was afterwards sacrificed by a too honest criticism of the emperor's design. Still, notwithstanding the disapprobation of Apollodorus, no temple in ancient Rome excelled it in grandeur. The remains of the pillared colonnade border the Sacred Way—that way still paved with the identical great blocks of stone worn by the chariot-wheels of old Rome! What a world of recollection does it not evoke! What tears have fallen here—what glory passed by! How many joyful feet have rushed along it—what noble blood has soiled it! Here passed the Emperors Augustus, Nero, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian, gods and priests, to offer sacrifices in the great temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, “supremely great and good,” followed by the most gorgeous trains the sun ever shone upon. Here passed the triumphant generals and commanders seated in burnished chariots of gold—Trajan and Titus and Julius Cæsar, Pompey and Sylla, and so many others, crowned with martial laurels won from barbarian nations whose names the world scarce knew—bearing the front of celestial Jove himself in their high pride, as the voices of assembled thousands proclaimed them “saviours of

their country," and saluted the victorious legions in their train. Slowly and wearily over those great stones long lines of captives dragged their clanking chains. Here passed the Apostles Peter and Paul to the damp vaults of the Mamertine prison; and here the captive Jews, chained to the car of victorious Titus, licked the dust before the Roman plebeians. And if tears have fallen, blood has also been spilt. The aged Galba tottered along it towards the Milliarum Aureum, when, regardless of his grey hairs, the savage soldiers mercilessly massacred him, opposite the Forum, in face of the Roman people, who dared not raise a voice to stay the cruel deed. Vitellius, too, was dragged half clothed along the Sacred Way, like a beast to be slaughtered in the shambles. Here in early times the wicked Tullia drove in her chariot to the Forum, where sat her husband Lucius, the murderer of her father, whom she saluted king. Here Messalina, proud as Juno, flaunted her voluptuous charms and perfumed vestments. Lucretia's footsteps often pressed these stones when, still a proud and happy wife, she passed to sacrifice in the temple of Juno, where none but the chastest matrons dared to enter. Out by hence Volumnia and Virgilia sped, fired with the high resolve of saving prostrate Rome; and here, too, on her

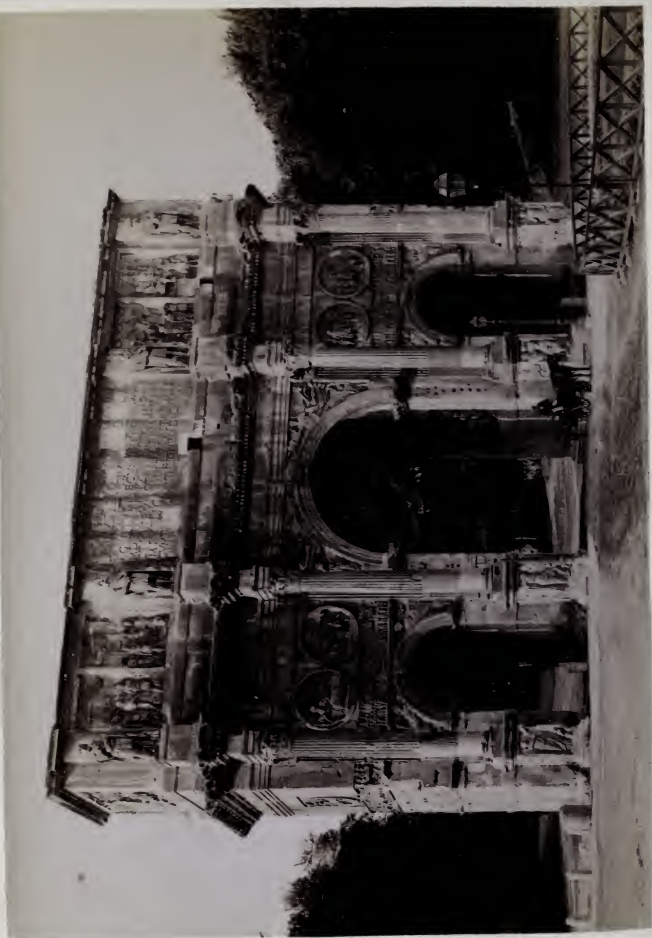
way to school, went young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome,

“With her small tablets in her hand,
And her satchel on her arm.”

The elegant Horace himself tells us he loved to saunter here and criticise the passing scene; and Cicero, with his imperious wife, Terentia—and Catullus and Tacitus—and Livy, all in their day traversed this great world-thoroughfare, ever ebbing and flowing with multitudes from the basilicas, the temples, the forums, and the circus that bordered its sides: those sides where stood strange uncouth elephants of bronze side by side with the statue of Horatius, who nobly held the bridge against the Etruscan army, and of the brave maiden Clœlia, who, rather than dwell longer in the camp of her country's enemies, trusted herself and her companions to the waters of Father Tiber, “to whom the Romans pray.”

And now I have reached the Forum. How lovely it is here under this mild and tempered light! No harsh lines—no rude contrasts—no incongruous colours now break the spell that haunts the scene of the mighty past. The lonely marble pillars stand out clear and bright, linking together historic memories of the splendour with which it was once adorned. Lofty arches appear, bearing

no marks of decay, but fresh and snowy as when first dug from the marble quarries; and deep porticoes cast long shadows over the modern buildings, which now shrink back, ashamed to obtrude on this honoured ground haunted by the memories of heroic deeds, and consecrated in the page of history above any other spot on God's wide earth. It is an awful and a solemn thing to visit the valley of the Forum by night; the darkness of ages and the dimness of decay are imaged by the heavy gloom that then hangs around these mysterious precincts—precincts haunted by the mighty dead, whose shadows seem yet to linger about the habitations they loved so well when living. Yonder stood that venerable Forum, the hearth and home of early as of imperial Rome; the market, the exchange, the judgment-seat, the promenade, the parliament, where lived, and moved, and loved, and fought that iron nation predestined to possess the earth, founded (in the fabulous days when the world was young, and the gods loved "the daughters of men") by Romulus on the field where he waged battle with the Sabine forces. Finding that his troops were flying before the enemy, and that no one would face about to fight, Romulus knelt down in the midst of his terrified soldiers, and lifting up his



hands to heaven, prayed "Father Jupiter" to defend and rally his people, now in extreme peril. Jupiter, it was believed, heard and granted his prayer; for the fugitives, struck with sudden reverence for their king, turned, re-formed their broken lines, and repulsed the advancing Sabines. But the daughters of the Sabines, who had previously been forcibly carried off from the Great Circus, rushed down from the Aventine between the opposing armies, with their infants in their arms, calling now on a Roman husband, now on a Sabine father or brother to desist, and so stayed the fight by their cries, lamentations, and entreaties. Peace was then concluded between the two nations, and Tatius, the Sabine king, offered sacrifices and joined in eternal friendship with Romulus—burying the wrongs done to the Sabine women in the foundations of the common Forum. Tarquinius Priscus erected spacious porticoes around it to screen and temper the halls from the sun and wind, and built shops for the foreign wares that came from Ostia, Antium, and Etruria: those shops forever famous as the spot where perished the girl Virginia by her father's hand.

I endeavoured to rebuild the fallen walls of the Forum such as they afterwards appeared—a vast and noble enclosure—surrounded by many

ranges of marble columns, open arcades, and majestic porticoes, stretching away in long lines towards the Capitoline Mount. Between these stately colonnades rose a wall of division, hung, in the time of Cæsar, with splendid drapery, to shelter the togaed senators, tribunes, and patricians, who paced up and down on brilliant mosaic floors, or sat in judgment in the senate-house, or gave laws to the universe. Innumerable statues, modelled by the best sculptors of Greece and Rome, broke the lines of the pillars, while brilliant paintings decorated the internal walls, within whose ample enclosure rose three great basilicas—the Optima, the Æmilian, and the Julian, besides the Comitium, where the Curiæ met. The rostra also stood within the Forum, containing the orator's pulpit, where Rome so often hung enchanted over the eloquence of Cicero; where Mark Antony fired the populace to revenge "great Cæsar's fall," the mutilated body lying on a bier exposed before him; where Caius Gracchus melted the hearts of his audience; and where Manlius sought to suspend the fatal sentence hanging over him as he pointed to the Capitol and bade his countrymen remember how his arm alone had sustained it. Close at hand was the tribunal where the magistrates sat on ivory chairs, whence came

the decree of Brutus condemning his own sons to die, and that other of Titus Manlius, who preferred his son's death at his tribunal rather than, living, know him disobedient to the consular power, then vested in himself—barbarous rigour, that afterwards wrought such grief and woe, when power and injustice went hand in hand in Rome! Near here grew the Ruminalis—that mysterious fig tree whose shade sheltered Romulus and Remus while the wolf suckled them. In the time of Augustus it was enclosed in a temple. The sanctuary of Vesta, with its roof of bronze, stood near the Comitium, circular in shape, chaste, and pure in design, where the sacred virgins, clad in long white vestments bordered with imperial purple, tended the sacred fire that burned under the image of the goddess, and guarded the Palladium—a golden shield, on whose preservation it was said Rome's existence depended. Behind the temple, at the foot of the Palatine, stretches a wood of evergreen oaks devoted to silence and repose, where the dark branches waved over the tombs of departed vestals, whose spirits it was believed passed at once to the delights of the Elysian Fields. Under the Palatine Hill, and near the shrine of Vesta, a pure fountain of freshest water broke into a magnificent marble basin close to

the portico of a temple dedicated to Castor and Pollux. It was said, and believed, that after the battle of Lake Regillus, the great twin brethren, mounted on snow-white horses and radiant in celestial beauty, suddenly appeared in the Forum, and announced to the anxious and expectant multitude the victory gained by their fellow-citizens over the Etruscans. At this fountain they stopped and refreshed their horses, and when asked whence they came and by what name men called them, they suddenly disappeared. So the Romans raised a temple to their honour by the spring where they had rested on mortal earth.

Where now the moon lights up a barren space, the Gulf of Curtius once yawned in the very midst of the Forum, to the horror and astonishment of the superstitious senators, who judged the omen so awful, that the anger of the gods could only be allayed by the sacrifice of what Rome deemed most precious—a bold and noble warrior, armed *cap-à-pie*, who flung himself headlong into the abyss.

Afterwards Domitian raised, as it were in derision, a colossal statue of himself over this spot hallowed by patriotic recollections. Beside it stands the single column of Phocas, once crowned by his gilded statue; while, to the right,



the massive pile of the triumphal Arch of Severus flings down black shadows on the marble stairs descending from the Capitol.

The Capitol, the heart of Rome, the sanctuary of the pagan world, stood forth in my fancy radiant and glorious, piled with glittering temples, superb porticoes, and lofty arches, the abodes of the gods on earth. Here, amidst statues, monuments, and columns, rose sumptuous fanes consecrated to Peace, to Vespasian, Jupiter-Feretrius and Saturn; while, crowning the hill and overlooking the Forum, is the Tabularium, surrounded by long ranges of open porticoes, within whose walls hang recorded, on tables of brass, the treaties Rome concluded with friends or enemies.

Around is an open space called the Intremontium, between the rising peaks of the hill, where grew a few shattered time-worn oaks, endeared to the plebs by the recollection that Romulus made this spot at all times the most sacred and inviolable asylum to those who sought the hospitality of his new city. All crimes, all treasons safely harboured here! To the right, high above the rest, uprose the awful temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, at once a fortress and a sanctuary—the most venerable and the most gorgeous pile that the imagination of man can conceive, adorned

with all that art could invent, and blazing with the plunder of the world. Here came the consuls to assume the military dress, and to offer sacrifices before proceeding to battle. Here, in special seasons of danger, the senate assembled before the statue of the god who presided, as it were, over the destinies of the people; here the tables of the law were displayed to the citizens, and the most splendid religious rites performed. The façade, turned towards the south and east, consisted of a gigantic portico supported by six ranges of columns; statues of gilt bronze alternated with the pillars, on which were suspended countless trophies of victory, magnificent shields and plates of gold, glittering arms won from barbarian enemies, together with swords, axes, and shields worn by generals who had returned victorious to Rome, and who had enjoyed the honours of a military triumph. Statues of gilt bronze were ranged along the roof, covered in with tiles of gilt brass, all save the cupola, which was open, disdaining any other roofing than that of the eternal heavens. Superb basso-relievi decorated the entablature and frieze, and vast colonnades of the most precious marbles extended on either side of the central temple, linking together two side porticoes of almost equal splendour. That

to the right was dedicated to Juno; that to the left to Minerva, the wife and daughter of the terrible god who sat enthroned within the gilded walls of the central sanctuary, crowned with a golden diadem, wearing a toga of purple, and holding in his hand the awful thunder destined to destroy the enemies of imperial Rome. Jupiter, "supremely great and good," had never, according to the Romans, condescended to inhabit any other earthly abode, and was particularly propitious when approached in his great temple on the Capitol, where his altars burned with perpetual incense spread by imperial hands, and generals, Cæsars, kings, and potentates came from the far ends of the earth to offer costly sacrifices and worship.

Beyond the Tabularium, on the opposite side of the hill, where the moon now lights up a mass of dingy walls, stood the citadel built on the Tarpeian Rock, its base once bathed by the waters of the Tiber. This fortress, conquered by the indignant Sabines and heroically defended by Manlius against the Gauls, is now no more. Not a vestige remains of it save only, in the museum of the Campidoglio, the "brazen images" of those patriotic geese that woke the echoes on that dark night so nearly fatal to the existence of Rome. A

temple dedicated to Juno Moneta was afterwards built on the foundations of the house of Manlius, where the archives of the city and the public treasury were preserved.

And what was this mighty city that I sought to disinter from the darkness of the past, and to rebuild, standing alone in the Forum under the moon's pale light? Within its precincts the dark ilex and cypress branches waved over altars, grottoes, and tombs, in thirty-two sacred groves. Fourteen aqueducts once linked Rome with the Alban and Sabine Hills, drawing large rivers and softly-gushing mountain-springs to feed its fountains, palaces, and circuses. From the golden milestone in the Forum distances were measured, and roads extended over the whole of the then known world—the Appian, the *regina viarum*, passing through Naples to Brindisi, the Flaminian, the Aurelian, the Latin, Æmilian, and Salarian Ways. Along those endless high roads, in sumptuous palaces, under countless porticoes, in temples and forums (of which Rome reckoned fourteen, each of surpassing magnificence), circuses, and baths, all monuments of the luxury, the power, and the civilisation of the mistress of the world, five millions of inhabitants circulated. Fifty-six public baths of unrivalled size and splendour



served as a promenade and recreation to this luxurious people. Two immense amphitheatres and two circuses, each accommodating nearly one hundred thousand spectators, amused their idle hours. Five vast lakes for naval combats, thirty-six marble arches of triumph, nineteen public libraries, forty-eight obelisks, and a universe of marble, bronze, and stone statues, peopled the city with an elegant and refined splendour.

Where now the desolate Campagna clasps the fallen city with a zone of sylvan beauty, buildings, streets, markets, temples, gardens, the environments of an immense city, once appeared. The fatal beauty of this district tells a tale of former splendour, even after centuries of ruin. Rome once extended to Otricoli (a day's journey distant), to Ostia (where the sea bore merchandise and riches to its shores), to Tivoli, and to Albano. Then came a cincture of enchanting villas, wealthy farms, and rich vineyards belonging to emperors and nobles, nestling in soft valleys, clothing the distant mountains with incredible fertility, and adorning even the remotest rural districts with monuments of rich and varied architecture.

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I have been much struck to-day with the pen-

sive solitary beauty of the Villa Borghese, embosomed in its dark ilex woods, with a spreading pine here and there cutting the landscape, and giving a peculiar and classical character to the scene. The fountains breaking the long vistas through the woods have a charming effect, and are the only artificial feature in an essentially natural whole. Such views, too, towards Albano and Frascati, deepening with rich purple light, are never to be forgotten. The villa itself is a somewhat mean building for such extensive grounds, but rich in treasures of sculpture.

I was delighted with the Apollo and Daphne of Bernini, one of the most lovely statues I ever beheld. The transformation of Daphne is given with marvellous truth. She is already enclosed within the trunk, which seems to be mounting, as it were, momentarily to her breast. Her hair has already thickened into leaves; the fingers are sprouting with wonderful truth; and her toes have turned earthwards in tiny, delicate, rooty fibres and strings. There is, too, a certain air of desperate satisfaction in her countenance as she feels her escape from Apollo insured; and yet she is, as it were, still flying on the wings of the wind, though only half animate. Apollo is by no means, to be compared with the nymph. There are many



Extending from the Chapel of the Sacrament, towards the altar was a double file of soldiers, mixed with the grotesque Swiss guard stationed at intervals. It was an odd thing to see the military introduced fully armed in the very house of God, and argued a strange state of government, under which the Pope could not visit St. Peter's in safety without their protection: but so goes the world at Rome. After a due proportion of waiting, Pius IX. appeared, surrounded by his tattered court, slowly advancing through the lines of military, who, presenting arms and falling on their knees, woke the deep echoes of the great building.

I stood close to the temporary altar of crimson velvet and gold where the Pope performed his devotions, and saw him admirably. He is a fat, benevolent, soft-looking man; his expression decidedly prepossessing, but at the same time essentially priestly. His hair is quite white, and he altogether looks older than I had expected. He was dressed principally in white, with a slight mixture of red. A priest, or page, held up his rather short petticoat behind and displayed his legs, which looked absurd. The cardinals and monsignori in red, and the canonici in purple, also repeated their orisons. I thought them a

singularly vulgar-looking set. After his Holiness had said his prayer, he rose and proceeded to the altar behind the central *baldacchino*. The apsis or choir had been elaborately decorated, and presented a gorgeous *coup d'œil*. Hundreds of splendid glass candelabra were suspended from the top to the bottom of the walls; drapery covered all the intermediate space; while at certain distances large pictures represented the notable actions of the hero of the day. In the centre of the choir, immediately over St. Peter's chair, in a gigantic gold frame, was displayed his portrait, illuminated from behind. I have seen the Scala at Milan, and many other gorgeous opera-houses, but I never beheld one to compare with this, which resembled nothing else, however—the choir being the stage, and the Pope and cardinals the actors, with ourselves, the mighty mass of spectators, the audience.

As a spectacle, it was beyond words splendid. Millions of candles light up the space now dimmed by the falling day. After the Pope has proclaimed from the altar the name, style, and title of the new *beatificato*, which was duly recorded on parchment borne by his attendants, he slowly withdrew, casting blessings around as he passed along, which were received, I thought,

with tolerable indifference. A small book was thrust into my hand, purporting to be a life of the new saint, a curiosity of superstition, containing accounts of his supposed miracles, which I took the liberty not in the least to believe.

I then went to look at the statue of St. Peter (*alias* Jupiter), and scarcely recognised my worthy friend in his holiday garb: he was arrayed in robes of crimson cloth of gold, draped regally about his sable person. The tiara, with its triple crown sparkling with jewels, adorned his head, and a ring of enormous size appeared on his finger. Whether in this guise the image looked most hideous or ludicrous it would be hard to say, but a more grossly grotesque object I never beheld. If it is not image-worship for the people to kneel down and kiss his toe, and pray before him, I know not what is. It was a grievous, shameful sight, that grim idol, decked out like a frightful black doll, to be kissed and adored!

The view from the Capitol gives one in five minutes a clear idea of ancient Rome. As a view it is varied and beautiful, more picturesque than any other in the city. The seven hills, to common, ignorant souls like myself, are all myths; for hills there are none, except the Quirinal, Coelian, and Pincian, with the little mound on which the



Capitol stands. But how many things one sees in Rome that are respectable only for their names! The Tarpeian Rock, for instance, is a very disappointing place, a mere garden on a shelf of hillside, from which one looks down into a mean little court surrounded by poor houses. I don't see why *this* spot is particularly to be fixed on more than any other portion of the rock on which the Capitol stands: the people of the garden of course are positive on the subject, as it brings the *quattrini*. Then the clamorous little beggars, and the steps down into the Piazza on the Capitol—how steep, dirty, and disagreeable!

All the world knows *the thing* in the Museum is the Dying Gladiator—a most wonderful statue indeed; the very life seems ebbing out of the marble—actually dying, and grieving over approaching death. It has more expression than the Apollo, that being a spiritualised statue of a god—this a mortal man, full of the passions and sufferings of humanity. A bust of Julian the Apostate struck me vastly, as bearing just the restless, cunning, unsympathetic countenance I should have fancied; yet with this cunning and restlessness is blended a strange look of dignity, for he, too, was a nephew of the great Flavian. There also is a horrid statue of the Infant Her-

cules, a swollen, puffy abortion, like an Indian Idol—in green bronze too!

An old beggar came limping in, although the custode would fain have excluded him; also a Roman *contadina*, who frankly confessed, "*Ma guardo e guardo, ma poi non vedo niente.*" She and her companion soon settled down in deep contemplation of a much mutilated bronze horse, excavated from some part of the city near where they lived, which pleased them far more than all the rest. They hung about the custode like bees around honey, and he made himself great in their ignorance.

There are some charming pictures on the opposite side of the building. Guercino's "Sibylla Persica" is here; also a splendid picture by him—the "Glorification of Santa Petronella," warm, rich, and Venetian. Some wonderful works of Garofalo's, too, an artist one can only know at Ferrara and Rome, who unites the grander colouring of the Venetian to the conception and drawing of the Tuscan school. The more I see of his works, the more I admire them. The Paul Veroneses are fine also, and placed so that they can be seen, which is an advantage wanting in some of his best works at Venice, where, from the bad light in the churches, they are nearly invisible.

and a priest under a dirty umbrella, going to administer extreme unction to a dying person. Down dropped all the people on their knees. Among the crowd were some gentlemen, who took especial care to cleanse their nether garments afterwards with handkerchiefs.

A long, flat drive brought us to the church, which outside makes no particular show, standing as it does so badly; but, on entering, what words can describe my astonishment at its stupendous size and splendour? The marble columns of the nave, placed like those in Santa Maria Maggiore in the true basilica style, are surpassing in beauty, size, and proportion, melting into the distance most harmoniously. Over the apsis and tribune are superb mosaics, fresh and gorgeous, and exceeding in beauty even those of San Marco at Venice. The light, too, here falls on them so well. I say nothing of the marble, the Egyptian alabaster, and the malachite all round. One gets used to these material displays of magnificence. Under the altar has ever been the traditionary burial-place of St. Paul; but how his body can be here and at St. Peter's, and his head at the Lateran, I leave for Catholics to determine. A miracle, I presume, will settle the question. This convent is so dreadfully exposed to the influences

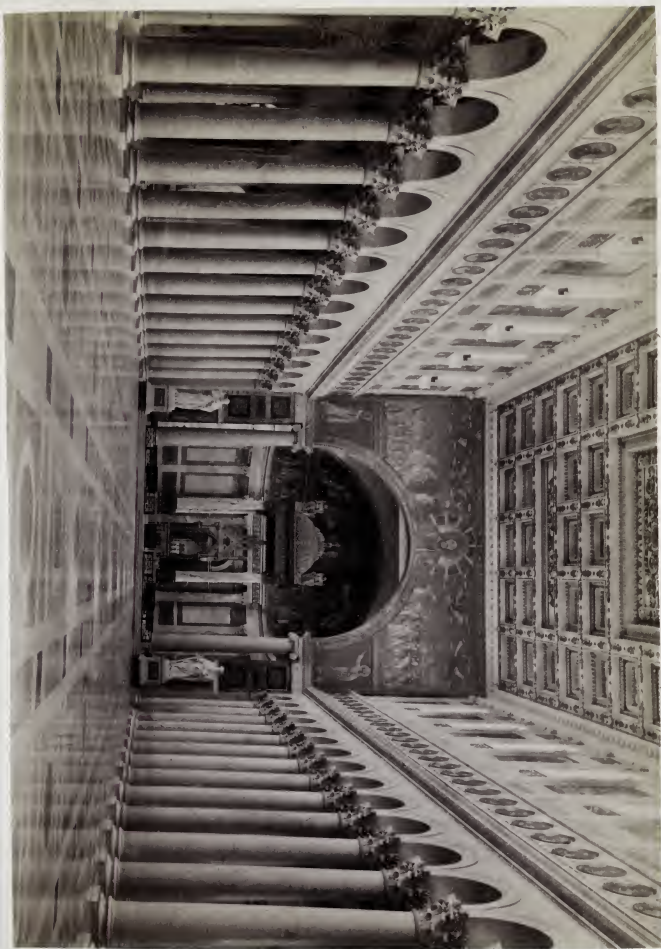




The whole drive to San Paolo fuori le Mura is deeply interesting. After threading dozens of labyrinth-like streets, the road all at once emerges on the broad, majestic Tiber. (N. B. I am fresh from Florence and the Arno.) To the right stands the graceful little temple of Vesta, chased and refined in aspect, as her temple should be. Below is another ancient temple, that of Fortuna Virilis, which the guide-books extol, but which I could not help thinking heavy and clumsy. Then there is the Ponte Rotto, now a spruce iron bridge. Standing on this bridge, one sees to the right the island of the Tiber, with two ugly old Roman bridges, dear in the eyes of antiquarians, connecting it with the town on either side, which rises in domes and campaniles, and piles of quaint old buildings along the river-side. Beyond the temple of Vesta is the church of the Bocca della Verità, so called from an old masque of Pan with an open mouth, into which the fingers of any one suspected of falsehood were introduced, in the belief that the stone lips would close on them if the person lied. It was a temple dedicated to Ceres, and is now surmounted by a fine Gothic campanile in galleries. Behind, the scene is closed by a high hill backing all. A procession issued out of the church, with lighted tapers,

and a priest under a dirty umbrella, going to administer extreme unction to a dying person. Down dropped all the people on their knees. Among the crowd were some gentlemen, who took especial care to cleanse their nether garments afterwards with handkerchiefs.

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of malaria that the monks can only reside here for six months in the year. They had just returned when I went there.

As we returned to Rome we entered it by the fine old gate of San Paolo. There is a splendid old bit of wall too, with high ruined turrets, like an enchanter's castle,—to what age belonging I have no idea. I never volunteer any description of the Roman walls, although, as antiquarians are so uncertain about them, I might as well venture my opinion. The Pyramid of Caius Cestius close by is as ugly as any other pyramid.

CHAPTER IX.

The Portrait of the Cenci—The Ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, and Sermon at the Coliseum—Rospigliosi Palace—Churches of the Trastevere and Corsini Palace—Solemn Benediction at San Gregorio—Colonna Palace, Gardens, and Ruins—The Conservatorio Rooms at the Capitol—Church of Ara Cœli—Villa Lodovisi.

NOT one of the innumerable copies gives any idea of the pensive, supplicating look of the Barberini Cenci, that sweetest and prettiest of all Guido's heads. She looks into one's face with an expression full of plaintive anxiety, as if excusing her dreadful crime, and imploring pity and love in a way that quite brings tears into one's eyes. The painting bears evidence of having been finished in haste, particularly the background, which gives it an additional air of reality. A portrait, said to be of her mother-in-law, hangs beside her—a hard, brazen-faced Italian dame, redolent of intrigue. Then there is Raphael's "Slave" close by; a charming picture, full of effect, but not of his usual effect—more like a Murillo or a Titian—the dress Eastern and pic-



turesque. *She* is a fair beauty, while by her side hangs the naked portrait of his own Fornarina, with a bracelet bearing his name on her bare arm—a bold, staring thing, with vicious eyes looking out of their corners at one—as a painting, infinitely inferior to that divine portrait of her in the Tribune at Florence, where the same face and form are transformed into a Juno of majesty and beauty. All these treasures are in one small whitewashed room. Indeed, the whole “gallery” is contained in two rooms. In the second are pretty things of Albano’s, representing Diana, &c.; but I grow weary of his affectation.

It is impossible to imagine such a confused mass of ruins as the so-called Palace of the Cæsars on the Palatine Hill. I felt disgusted with myself for not being able to make anything out until I saw that Eustace says it is impossible. Great shapeless walls, ugly and unpicturesque, with deep subterranean supports, in the way to underground passages and chambers, are all one sees after mounting a number of steps to a platform laid out as a market-garden. The view is alone worth the trouble, with the Coliseum close in front, and the Baths of Caracalla on the Aventine Hill opposite. Ruins in the midst of ruins, which, seen near, are but wretched skeletons, though impos-

ing at a certain distance. The way up to the Palace of the Cæsars is through a narrow door in a row of stables. Madame Besançon, the Florence milliner, was flaunting about the ruins with a party of young French *grisettes*.

Next day, the 4th of December, was beautiful. I went down to the Forum, and, entering the large gate on the right-hand side, under the Palatine (on the opposite side by which I had mounted yesterday), ascended by a fine double flight of steps to a balustraded terrace on a level with the Palace of the Cæsars; in fact, a portion of the same ruins. Ruins, ruins, nothing but ruins, of no shape or form, but absolutely fragments. Where stood the house of Tiberius (said to have been in this direction, but which he could have but little inhabited, never remaining long in Rome) is now a peaceful lettuce-garden, terminating on the brow of the hill in a pretty thicket of ilex, waving in the breeze like a crown of classical laurels. In the centre of the garden are the so-called Baths of Livia, a subterraneous apartment to which I descended by a flight of steps, which the guide lit with torches. There are two small lofty ante-rooms, and then the bath, a well-proportioned apartment of small dimensions, with slight remains of having been faced with marble





and ornamented with frescoes. The bath itself is only large enough for one person; the ceiling above is arched. No light, of course, comes from without, the whole being underground. I confess I felt the place stuffy and unpleasant, and was but little interested. I suppose I am wanting in archæological proclivities, for these antiquities simply bore me; so much so, indeed, that I did not even care to inspect the excavations more recently made by the Emperor of the French.

Afterwards I went to the Coliseum, it being Friday, to hear the usual sermon delivered there. In a rustic wooden pulpit, raised against the inner wall, stood a tonsured monk, dressed in brown, with a cord round his waist, who preached in Italian. Around him was grouped a numerous auditory. Beside the pulpit leant another monk, and below, several members of a *confraternità*, their faces completely covered, with only apertures for the eyes and mouth, dressed in light drab stuff. Up and down the central walk sauntered some English strangers. A group of Roman women, with their picturesque linen head-dresses and red petticoats, placed themselves in attitudes full of unaffected grace about the steps of the large crucifix in the centre. The preacher, in a fine sonorous voice, addressed himself directly to

the audience, discoursed of heaven and hell, and reminded them every word and action was recorded by the avenging angel, and that the Christ suspended by his side in the pulpit, on coming a second time, would judge, not pardon sinners. It was a scene for a painter. The sun shone brightly, and the blue sky peeped through the arches above.

In this vast amphitheatre, which had once rung with cries of "The Christians to the beasts!" that same Christ whom they adored is now proclaimed by the voice of a humble monk, while around lie the ruined temples of the gods with scarce one stone upon another! There was a great silence; no one spoke but in whispers, for every soul united in the universal, all-powerful feelings of the moment. Whatever might be the difference of creed, here was our common Lord, our common Saviour, our universal Judge!

To-day (December 10th) I visited the Rospigliosi Palace, situated within a large *cortile* on Monte Cavallo, planted with dwarf acacias. It is of immense size, more like a huge hospital than a private residence. The porter had great difficulty in preventing our paying a *bonâ-fide* visit to the princess in our earnestness to discover the *carte*



du pays; but at last we were set right, and, turning to the left, ascended a flight of steps leading into a small but beautiful and highly-cultivated garden, full of orange trees and delicious roses, and great heaps of mignonette. In the central room of the Casino, at the extremity of the garden, is the celebrated "Aurora," of which no copy can possibly render with justice the original. But why paint those exquisite masterpieces on ceilings, where one breaks one's neck looking up, and then never sees them properly after all? There is the same difficulty in the Sistine Chapel, where Michel Angelo's wonderful frescoes are comparatively lost from the position. Really it is barbarous. But here, the loveliness of the Hours who can tell?—loveliness for every taste—features in every mould of beauty. Not less lovely is the back of one delicious head with exquisitely fair braided hair blown by the winds, which seems to flutter as though one heard the whistling breeze sweeping high up among the great mountain clouds.

But really such an ugly *he* among such heaven-born *she's* is too bad. I must unconditionally quarrel with Phœbus, who has a most inexpressive face, something like a shaved woman! which I account for by the fact that Guido, from a con-

stant habit of painting women, could not adapt his soft pencil to the manly conceptions of a Titian or a Vandyke. Moreover, the hair of the god of day is so light that it might pass for grey. But away with criticism; it is an immortal work, and Aurora really does look so flying on the ambient air, one fancies each moment she will glide away and disappear like the bright vision of a rainbow. Her face is of a bold, decided cast, wanting the delicate loveliness of the attendant Hours—her action grand and majestic as she cleaves the air in her course with all the bearing of a goddess. Her saffron robe, rounded by the breeze, harmonises grandly with the golden clouds behind her, as though she too were clothed with no meaner garment than the gorgeous vapour. Still, one regrets that her figure should be so pressed against the edge of the picture, thus curtailing the effect that would have been insured by a greater height of background. The principal figure is thus, on a first glance, but a secondary object, and it is only after some moments, when time allows one to concentrate in some degree the admiring confusion of a first view into a steady gaze, that one contemplates her with sufficient attention. The bold shading of the horses is masterly; they actually appear as if rising from

the ceiling, so admirably are the bright lights thrown in.

The exquisite landscape under the clouds is not the least striking portion of the whole. There is a sea with white lateen sails dotted about here and there, bordered by mountains of the deepest Mediterranean blue. I could believe I was gazing on some lovely "bit" in the Corniche Road between Nice and Genoa, much diminished by distance, the colouring and outline are so to the very life. To the left comes a charming little touch of landscape, with dark outlying trees, suggestive of the deep mysteries of some pine forest. It reminded me a little of that most wonderful of all landscapes forming the background of Raphael's "Vision of Ezekiel" at Florence, breathing the very essence of that motionless, silent repose spread over all nature at mid-day, when dreams and visions arise in these burning latitudes. The room was crowded with copyists—vain labour to endeavour to reproduce forms and shades struck off in the happiest *furore* of genius when engaged in a task peculiarly sympathetic! Guido himself could never have copied that fresco, of which every touch was an inspiration.

There are some very interesting pictures in the adjoining rooms. In the left-hand room, some

fine heads by Rubens, who is always grand when he is not gross; and a curious portrait of Poussin, by himself, who, true even here to the deep green shades distinguishing his landscapes, has sacrificed his vanity in order to represent his face and person of the favourite tint, and appears, in consequence, a very livid, unearthly individual. Here, too, is Guido's famous "Andromeda," which, I confess, disappointed me, simply because the copies exactly resemble it; indeed, they are, barring the originality, quite as good. Her attitude is affected, like the Andromeda of a ballet; the sea is a vast mass, "without form and void;" and the monster is not nearly horrible enough for the occasion. The only one of the *dramatis personæ* I like is Perseus, who really is flying down from above in good earnest. The "Triumph of David," by Domenichino, tells a sad tale of the decline of art, being quite of "the silver age," as Gibson called it. I was vastly pleased with the "Death of Samson," by Caracci, in the opposite room—a grand picture, though deficient in colouring. The long arcade of the portico losing its pillared distance in the background—the prostrate figures in front howling, open-mouthed, in agony—the statue of the pagan god still erect and untouched by the falling columns—Samson himself, with up-

turned sightless eyes, sinking down overcome by his gigantic effort—beyond, and seen under the arches, the banquet where Delilah is seated, who raises her hands while the other Philistines rise in horror—brings the whole drama vividly before one. Indeed, the sensation is that of giddiness, for all about seems falling also along with that great portico.

High up and ill seen is one of the loveliest of Albano's pictures—"Diana and Endymion," gazing at each other from opposite sides of a river; beyond is a wood, an Italian wood, black and shady, while here and there, among the trees, bright silver lights appear like gleams of crystal. No earthly lights seem these, but rays from the goddess herself, playing around her ere she sinks to rest, and under her crescent symbol "sleeps with Endymion."

The Via Appia, or Street of Tombs, is one of the grandest sights in Rome—an appropriate and affecting approach to the gates of the fallen mistress of the world; like her, in absolute ruin, but majestic in decay. Much as I had read and seen of this approach, the solemn reality far exceeded my expectations. Extending in a straight line from the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the long vista of ruins stretches for miles over the desolate Campagna;

stones, towers, monuments, shapeless masses, lie piled on each side, forming an avenue of ruin impossible to conceive. Beneath is the original Roman pavement, and very bad and rough it is. Then there is such an enchanting view of Rome and its ancient walls, the aqueducts stretching across the plain for miles and miles beyond the Apennines, ending in Mount Soracte, shaded in every colour from purple to pale yellowish pink. In front lies Frascati, nestled in the folds of the mountains, and dotted with forests and villages; above is Albano; while around extends the long level line of the Campagna, that earthen Dead Sea—calm, immovable, interminable, and looking equally accursed.

Yesterday I made a tour in the Trastevere, lying beyond St. Peter's, under the Janiculum. It is not in the least like Rome, but has a peculiar, indescribable look of its own. The principal streets are long, broad, and straight, while some of the smaller and more distant quarters are dangerously solitary. High up to the right, on the top of a steep ascent, stands the church of San Onofrio, with its surrounding colonnade. There is a venerable yet romantic look about the place which is very pleasing, and the view of Rome from the terrace before the entrance is quite magnificent—

grander far than from the Capitol. I think imagination run wild could scarcely conjure up a more varied and magnificent panorama.

Beside the church is a solitary garden planted with solemn old pine trees, where it is said Tasso, after his escape from Ferrara, loved to roam. At present it is remarkable as THE spot for viewing St. Peter's, standing below in all its vast proportions. The church of San Onofrio is in itself small and insignificant, save for its antiquated air. In the tribune are some lovely frescoes by Peruzzi. Most particularly beautiful is one in the centre, representing the Virgin and our Saviour enthroned. They are surrounded by a circle of deep blue clouds; her robe is of the same tint, also the mantle around the Christ, relieved below by the delicate pink of his other drapery. This deep blue is full of character, mysterious and grand. Above are frescoes by Pinturicchio—angels dancing and playing on instruments—all of surpassing grace; while above, under the form of an old man with outstretched arms, appears "The Eternal." Here, too, is a charming dewy Correggio, besides some other good frescoes. The tomb of Tasso is surmounted by a mean profile likeness in oils, set in a medallion—a miserable daub, which the friars themselves say is no likeness. This tomb is a

disgrace to Rome. In death as in life, Tasso seems fated to neglect and contumely, and whilst Ariosto and Dante boast the proudest monuments, he alone is left without a fitting memorial. The frescoes of Domenichino outside the church, under a colonnade, are faded and poor.

Santa Maria in Trastevere, a grand basilica, stands in a piazza, with a piazza's usual accompaniment—a lovely fountain. There are some curious frescoes outside, of the twelfth century—the Virgin on her throne, with female saints on either side, crowned and bearing basins streaked with blood, marking them as having been martyrs. The interior is solemn and sombre, and of fine proportions, consisting of parallel rows of columns up the nave, great single blocks, with a high entablature above. There was an excessive air of devotion among the people present, who looked savagely at an intruder, while a sulky old sacristano would not give me any information—a rare thing in polite Italy.

The apsis is considerably raised, on steps; around are many curious old monuments; everything, indeed, looks as antique as if no one had touched the place since the time of its founder, Julius I., in 340. It is said to have been the first church where service was ever performed. Num-

bers of popes have restored and embellished it. Over the apsis are some fine mosaics—Christ and the Virgin enthroned, in the Romanesque style, which makes their relative position very remarkable; then there are popes, apostles, and prophets *à l'ordinaire*. Kugler says, "The release from the trammels of the Byzantine school is here apparent, and they may be considered the first purely Western work of a higher order produced by Italian art."

I call this a terrible church. It quite frightened me, it looked altogether so stern. I wouldn't sleep in it for the fortune of Torlonia. I am sure the martyrs walk about with their heads under their arms. There is an elegant chapel designed by Domenichino, with an angel on the ceiling which he has left unfinished. All that brings one face to face with these great masters in "their habit as they lived" is interesting.

Santa Maria dell' Orto is situated in an out-of-the-way corner, between high walls with palm trees and oranges peeping over—a very convenient place to be robbed in. I had immense difficulty in getting in, as the sacristano is deaf, and had gone aloft to wind the clock up. His daughter, a slatternly young damsel in slipshod shoes, called and screamed, "Papa, papa!" to

every note in the gamut, for a long time addressing only empty air. At last, when the clock was wound, down came the old man, and the door was opened. This is a beautiful church, quite a small St. Peter's, covered in the same style with the most precious marbles, and designed by Giulio Romano in admirable taste. One cannot say if it be large or small, so perfect are the proportions—quite a gem of architecture. It is called Dell' Orto from a miraculous picture behind the altar, found in a garden, the spot being marked by a stone, with an inscription, in the centre of the church. How strange to find such a shrine hid in an obscure forsaken corner—the cloisters too, occupied as a manufactory of tobacco!

I next drove to Santa Cecilia, built on what *was* the house of that interesting personage; standing back from the street, in a large *cortile*—a low, quaint old building, something like a barn decorated with columns. Her life, under Catholic handling, has become a pretty legend. In extreme youth she was converted to Christianity, but, notwithstanding, was forced to marry a pagan. A vow of chastity prevented her consenting to live with him as a wife, which her husband much resented showing his displeasure by conduct marked by savage bru-

talities. But her sweetness and resignation overcame him, and he learnt to respect without understanding her. At this period he was visited with a dream. He imagined he was in heaven, where his hands were joined to those of his wife by angels, who crowned them both with roses and lilies. His brother Tiberius, entering his apartment soon after, asked from whence came the delicious odour of flowers he perceived. So great an impression was made on them both by this circumstance, added to Cecilia's entreaties, that they became Christians.

The prefect of Rome soon discovered their altered sentiments, condemned St. Cecilia to be stifled in her bath, and her husband and brother-in-law to be decapitated. In a side chapel is shown the identical bath where she was condemned to suffer martyrdom. It has evidently been an ancient bath-room, and is exceedingly curious. There are still the remains of the leaden pipes, and the spaces and holes round the walls for the evaporation of the steam. This dates back as early as A.D. 230, she having been among the early martyrs.

But the beauty of beauties is her monument under the high-altar, sculptured by Maderno, an

artist who assisted Bernini in his additions to San Pietro. The saint is lying as in an open coffin, precisely as her remains were found when, after miraculously escaping death by suffocation, she was beheaded. The face is turned away, giving a sweet curve to the neck, a little band encircling it so as to conceal the severance; the body, delicately small and fragile; the pretty feet bare—all, as it were, twisted into a strange form, as if flung negligently into the grave. The body is covered with grave-clothes, save only the head and neck; the former is wrapped round with a cloth. To give an idea of the affecting and exquisite beauty, the *deadness* of the whole figure, is impossible. I could have gazed upon it for hours.

St. Cecilia, as patroness of music, is all-glorious in Raphael's divine picture at Bologna— young, fresh, glowing, her face upturned with an inspired look, while in her hands are the keys of an organ: a most sweet saint.

Nuns inhabit the convent opening from the church. They live under the strictest rules. They *never* are to be seen, but fly from gazers, and sing in a gallery surrounding the church behind a gilded screen. Many of them (the female custode said) are young and beautiful.

I could not conclude my tour in the Trastevere

without a visit to a magnificent edifice, the Corsini Palace, whose only fault is its situation. Still, such a building lends dignity even to a suburb.

The carriage enters a double *cortile* surrounded by pillars, open on one side to the garden, ascending the steep side of the Janiculum, which rises abruptly behind. One is deposited at the foot of the great staircase, which, after the first flight, divides majestically, and so mounts to the upper story, producing a noble effect. On the first-floor is the gallery, entered through a fine large hall, where the different doorways are screened with the Corsini arms, richly embroidered on red velvet. The gallery is immense, consisting of at least ten large rooms filled with pictures; but, on the whole, not an interesting collection. There is a great deal of trash, and too little variety; especially an over-abundance of enamelled, affected Carlo Dolces and *maniéré* Carlo Marattas—the latter especially, all as like “as two peas,” for one sees his wife’s face in every picture, always turned the same way, and with the same head-drapery. Both these painters belong to the second or silver age in painting, after the pure gold of Raphael, Titian, and the elder masters had been exhausted. There is one fine dewy Carlo Dolce—a Virgin and Child, much superior to many

other of his works here. The Corsini appear to revel in a perfect indigestion of Carlo Dolces, for the gallery of their Florence place is also full of his pictures. There is his celebrated "Head of Poetry," which, truth to say, looks ill, thin, and languid, to my mind, afflicted also with rather weak eyes.

But to return: here are some fine Guercinos, specially a head of Christ crowned with thorns—*horribly* beautiful—some bluish Caraccis, and some pale, inexpressive Guidos. Strange that an artist who *could* paint so divinely should condescend to produce such meagre shadows as these. Never did genius display a greater inequality. Among a multitude of uninteresting and feeble landscapes are some interesting ones by Poussin and Salvator Rosa. A number, too, of Dutch pictures are here—Boths, Berghems, &c. But I hate this low-life school at all times, and most of all in dear, romantic, poetic Italy, where such a style is an abomination. There is a fine portrait of Philip II., our bloody Mary's pale, lean tyrant, by Titian, and others of great interest and immense value as paintings by Albert Durer, Vandyke, Rubens, &c. Two pictures by the latter are especially fine, showing how well he *could* paint when not indulging in exaggeration

and coarseness. Luther and his wife are curious as portraits. She is hideous, which makes his marriage all the more pardonable, as he never, most assuredly, induced her to break her vows for the sake of her beauty. Luther is a fat, jolly friar, with a double chin, a vulgar face, and stupid expression.

The so-called gem of the collection is a Murillo—a very ugly Virgin (more than commonly homely and uninteresting *even* for him) sitting with the Infant Saviour against a sun-baked wall. The colouring is superb, but the subject—the lay figure—atrocious.

What kings and princes are these Corsini, to possess two such palaces, one darkening the Lung Arno at Florence, with a superb gallery of paintings also; and this overgrown, monstrously fine place at Rome, with dozens of splendid villas in Tuscany and Romagna to boot!

The other day I went to the church of St. Gregory the Great, to see a certain abbot-elect of some place in England solemnly blessed by Cardinal A——; a grand affair, to which one was admitted by printed invitations, as if it had been a ball.

The morning of the ceremony was one of the very worst of the year—a pouring rain, such as

Rome only can boast—rivers ran down the streets, and water-spouts poured from the heavens. The church of St. Gregory, beyond the Coliseum, is situated in the worst part of the city in point of roads. The carriage sank down in the soft mud, and the horses scrambled over the ancient Roman way under the arch of Titus, as if they intended to lose their legs and deposit us there in the shape of modern ruins. Despite the weather, however, a number of carriages were already assembled at the foot of the handsome flight of steps on which stands the church, in a quiet, sequestered corner near some public gardens, whose groves afford a pleasant shade in a fine day, and enliven a somewhat gloomy position. It is not a large building, and I was disappointed to find the interior entirely modernised. Monsignore T—— received us near the door, and placed us in an excellent position close by the altar. Cardinal A—— soon advanced within the rails, and the organ pealed forth. The robed priests were all at the altar, and such a rustling of silks, and satins, and embroideries—such a display of lace and fine linen never could have been conceived out of a milliner's shop. The abbot-elect undressed until one became positively alarmed at the probable consequences, and I irreverently

thought of the clown at Astley's; but, as in the case of that personage, the contingency had been duly provided against; and, much as was taken off, still more remained behind. The poor man must have narrowly escaped suffocation in his original state. As to the cardinal, he peeled repeatedly in the course of the morning, and underwent the most marvellous transformations. He began in black, changed into red, and finally came out very splendid in purple. How all this was managed I cannot say; I can only vouch for the fact. He looked remarkably well in the last dress, with a scarlet cap—like an old Venetian picture by Tintoretto; and nothing could be more dignified and appropriate than his appearance as he sat enthroned in a great gilt arm-chair, under the temporary canopy of crimson velvet erected for him. One fat Benedictine monk in attendance on him nearly underwent strangulation in the process of dressing. He could not get into his clothes on any terms, and performed agonising gymnastics, which caused him to look very red in the face all the morning afterwards. Then others could not find the strings to tie on their vestments, and left them hanging down behind on the black *sottane* like untidy schoolboys. Altogether there was no end of confusion.

I never was present at so wearisome a ceremony. It lasted *five* entire hours. I never saw, even in Rome, such walking about, and such extra bowing, and the same things done over and over again, as if for a penance—and a real penance it was in good truth to me, heretic as I am!

The abbot-elect paraded backwards and forwards within the rails and without the rails twenty times, and put his mitre on and took it off until I actually got giddy. There was a regular ecclesiastical prompter, or master of the ceremonies, who kept everybody in order, making the funniest little nods and subdued gestures, like a well-behaved Neapolitan, as he marshalled them when to sit and when to stand, and if the eternal mitre was or was not to be worn. The abbot-elect (poor man, how I pitied him!) lay flat and prostrate on the steps of the altar for nearly an hour, while the seven penitential psalms were chanted over him. When he got up he looked as if he had but just escaped apoplexy. It was an immense relief when all this tiresome ceremonial was over.

The Palazzo Colonna, like a true Roman house, looks nothing at all from the street; indeed, I am pretty sure that a row of shops are erected in front—stables there are certainly, and a church

pushed violently up into one corner. Over this odd medley of buildings are fixed the *stemma* or armorial bearings of the great Colonna. On entering a vast *cortile* the enormous size of the palazzo appears; still, all jumbled together, and without any regular façade, masses of wall run in all directions, and open into inner courts and all sorts of wonderful places, covering an immense space of ground. Half of the *piano-nobile*, or first-floor, is occupied by the French Embassy; the other half is dedicated to the family and their pictures; and, as both these suites are respectively the finest in Rome, the extent of the whole palace may be imagined. Below, on the ground-floor, was the studio of that charming painter, the Professore Minardi, as well as a military barrack; above, *al secondo*, are the private apartments of the Colonna family; so altogether it is much like a Noah's ark in point of variety. Between the French ambassador and the picture-gallery one common stair is used, leading into a general ante-room of great size, where the numerous doors are all alike covered with tapestry, so that it would be a very pardonable mistake if one walked direct into the presence of the Frenchman. Chance, however, directed my steps aright. The first two rooms are hung with old tapestry;

then begin the pictures, of which there is a most pleasing, but not an extensive, collection. In the first room are two landscapes by Albano, remarkable rather for size than beauty; and a Holy Family, by Giulio Romano, where the rich colouring recalls the Venetian school, while the admirable grouping reminds one of the disciple and admirer of Raphael. Here, too, is a beautiful Paul Veronese, bright, living, glowing. Portraits there are by Titian and Tintoretto, and Heaven only knows how many more. But who can tarry in these chambers with that glorious *sala* beyond, the finest room in all Rome, brilliant with frescoes, paintings, mirrors, chandeliers, statues, marbles, ivory, and gilding, all blending in one great glowing whole, charming and astonishing the bewildered gaze? It was built by one of the family, a great general, who, after a victory gained for the Venetians, as if the palace were not already immense enough, added this sumptuous gallery.

Truly these Italian nobles are lodged like kings of the earth. Palatial architecture cannot be conceived out of Italy. I remembered the words of Gibbon as my eye swept down the gorgeous space, when speaking of the family residences of the Roman princes "as the most costly monuments of

elegance and servitude; the perfect arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture having been prostituted in their service, and their galleries and gardens decorated with the most precious works of antiquity which taste and vanity have prompted them to collect." To be sure, this regal pile was raised by Pope Martin V., who, with a proper portion of that family pride for which popes are famous, wished to commemorate his reign by erecting a palatial residence; for those were days when popes were vastly pushed about and irreverently elbowed, and kept on the trot from Avignon to Rome, with an occasional flight into Spain, by way of change. Martin did, however, remain quietly in the Eternal City after the Council of Constance, and lived to finish this prize palace.

The gallery is more than two hundred and twenty feet long, terminating at the further end in a sort of tribune supported by vast columns, and raised on steps. Within this holy of holies, in aristocratic exclusiveness, are two beautiful Venuses by Bronzino, whom the extreme delicacy of the present prince has caused to be draped with an ill-assorted garment painted in water-colours, and therefore removable. This dressmaking spoils two fine pictures entirely. It would

take pages to enumerate half the pictures and sculptures in this gallery. One fine portrait of the poetess Vittoria Colonna is very interesting; and another by Vandyke, of some family hero on horseback, striking and noble. As to the statues, I am grown difficult after the Vatican and the Capitol, and did not look at them. *The* thing is the superb gallery itself, the *ensemble* intoxicating the eye by a perfect harmony of colour, luxury, size, and grandeur. One of the marble steps is broken by a cannon-ball that penetrated the wall at the time of the revolution and siege. Prince Colonna has never allowed it to be repaired, and so it stands as a *memento mori*. From a window at the end of the gallery I entered the gardens which occupy the site of the baths of Constantine, on the steep ascent of the Quirinal, and the spot where those splendid horses were dug up that now ornament the beautiful fountain opposite the Pope's summer palace. Very picturesque gardens they are, ascending by double flights of steps through alleys of box and bay, along the margin of trickling streams and gushing fountains, to the hill above, where, from a grand terrace, one looks over Rome.

On this terrace are some gigantic fragments and capitals, said to have formed part of a Temple of the Sun erected by the Emperor Aurelian. Near

by, and looking down a place much like the bottomless pit, are some curious remains of baths, now used as a granary, but, like all other classical ruins, vague and indefinite. I poked my head down through an aperture into a deep vault of arched caverns, and I said, "Very curious!" "Dear me, how wonderful!" without a notion why, or understanding in the least what I was looking at.

Behind the terrace is a garden, not quite so ill kept as are Italian parterres in general. Great orange trees, loaded with fresh fruit, flung back the rays of the setting sun opposite, making one happy by the notion of having suddenly leaped into summer; for in these secluded nooks, embosomed in ilex and bay, within great orchards of the orange and the lemon, not a vestige reminds one of the course of the seasons, and a perennial summer reigns. We passed down a long covered *berceau*, and out through an iron gate opening on the Quirinal Hill opposite the Rospigliosi Palace, and near the beautiful fountain that crests the steep ascent of Monte Cavallo, opposite the Pope's palace. Here Castor and Pollux, in semblance of eternal youth and beauty, rein back their fiery steeds, whilst the lofty fountain rises between, sparkling, splashing, and shedding diamond drops around.

To-day I saw the apartments in the Capitol called the Conservatorio—a noble suite on the first-floor. They struck like a well, and even my Italian companion complained of the cold. The first two or three rooms are finely painted in fresco, the subjects chosen from Roman history. But in a certain corner chamber are collected the precious relics of the city—objects, perhaps, of greater interest than any others in the world. On a pedestal stands the bronze wolf with the infants Romulus and Remus. Pictures have made this group familiar in the furthest corner of the world, but the original is no less striking. To see the very bronze taken from the Forum, where it was *venerated* as the *genius* of Rome, and to see also the rent in the hinder leg made by the lightning which fell when Cæsar was murdered, is indeed a leap back into bygone centuries, and to feel individualised with their most famous legends. Opposite is a bronze bust of Junius Brutus, with the eyes painted, giving it a curious sinister expression. This had every appearance of an antique head, and of being a strong likeness. To what disputes have this head and the wolf given rise! What volumes have been written *per* and *contra* their originality! For my part, I delight in a most believing spirit, and to receive with faith all the custode tells me. Here,

too, are the bronze geese, with open, quacking bills—images of those that saved the city of the Cæsars. They were dug out, it is said, at the foot of the Tarpeian Rock. Here, also, are the *Fasti Consulares*, containing lists of all the consuls from the time of Augustus—mutilated, broken, and obscure, yet the only authentic guide that history possesses. Here is also a wonderful head of Medusa by Bernini, fine enough to take the second place in poetic horror after Leonardo's tremendous painting of her at Florence.

Nothing in Rome carried me more back to my early imaginations than the relics collected in these rooms. Here I realised Rome. Fabulous story and far-off history seemed, as it were, within my grasp; the great shadows of antiquity were resuscitated at my individual call.

Afterwards I went to the church of the *Ara Cœli*, close by, up that long flight of one hundred and twenty-four marble steps overtopping the Capitol, the site of the Temple of Jupiter *Feretrius*, to see the *Santo Bambino*. As I was in the company of a devout Catholic, I put on my gravest face—which, however, I found it a hard matter to maintain. We were ushered into a side chapel off the *sacristia*, where, after waiting some time,

one of the monks appeared. We intimated our wish to be presented, whereupon he straightway proceeded to light four candles on the altar, and to unlock the front panel, out of which he took a large gilt box. The box was covered with common, wearable-looking baby-clothes, which he put on one side. He then placed it on the altar, and unfastened the lid; several layers of white silk, edged with gold, were then removed, and at last appeared the Bambino, in the shape of an ugly painted doll, some two feet in length. A more complete little monster I never beheld—the face painted a violent red; the hair, also wooden, in rigid curls; altogether very like one of the acting troop in Punch's theatre. There was a gold and jewelled crown on its head, and the body—swathed in white silk, like an Italian baby—was covered with diamonds, emeralds, and pearls, but of no great size or value; the little feet were hollow, and of gold. Of all sights in the world, the Bambino *ought* to be the most humiliating to a Catholic. The monk said the Bambino was of *cinque-cento* workmanship, which they always do say, *faute de mieux*, and added, with a devout look, "*Ma e molto prodigioso.*" When he goes to the sick, he rides in a coach sent for him, and is held up at the window to be adored. At Christ-

mas there are no end of ceremonies, in which he takes a prominent part; first, the *presepio*. But he is very great indeed at the Epiphany, when he is paraded up and down the church, escorted by bands of splendid military music, playing polkas, and then held up at the great door facing the hundred and twenty-four steps, on which the people kneel and worship him!

The church of Ara Cœli is immortalised by Gibbon as the place where he first dreamed his future history. It was designed by Michel Angelo, and is to my mind one of the many *fiascos* committed by that extraordinary man. At Christmas time the Presepio is exhibited in one of the side chapels, and is much visited, as being the best in Rome. A species of theatre is formed, raised to the level of the altar, on which appear full-sized figures of Joseph and Mary; the latter holding in her arms the Bambino, wearing its diamond crown, and glittering with gold offerings and jewels. Before them are prostrated the shepherds, their sheep reposing near; in the recesses of the grotto-stable appear the oxen feeding in their stalls; while above, in a glory, heaven opens, and the Almighty, surrounded by the celestial host, gazes down upon the touching scene. As the representation is extremely graceful, and the

figures are artistically correct in drapery and expression, I must confess that I viewed with pleasure a sacred picture recalling the humiliation and love of our Lord, thus visibly brought home to the senses. By Catholics it is contemplated with unquestioning and unaffected reverence and gratitude. They adore the Saviour in the symbolic image, and earnest prayers, long looks of love, heaving sighs, and tearful eyes, evidence the intensity of their feelings. The Presepio is not shown until the falling day permits of an artificial light. When the body of the church is in deep gloom, this one bright, happy, genial spot shines out, shedding floods of typical and positive light around. After about an hour a Franciscan monk appears on the stage, blows out the lights, and lets down a curtain, terminating the exhibition in a most primitive manner.

Opposite this stage, for ten successive days after Christmas, little children, previously instructed by the monks, mount on a kind of wooden pulpit, erected beside a column, and pronounce a discourse, or sermon, on the subject of the divine Saviour's lowly birth and humble infant years. Some of the children (all of whom are very young) perform their part admirably, and are full of fire and animation. They gesticulate with an energy,

and scream with a vigour of lungs, quite Italian, as they stand opposite the mildly-illuminated Presepio, and point with their tiny fingers towards the image of Him through whom they, as well as ourselves, can alone find redemption.

The gardens of the Villa Lodovisi are decidedly the most beautiful in the vicinity of Rome, situated at the back of the Pincian Hill, close under the walls, and not far from the Villa Albani. On entering, I was astonished at its vast extent; for, in good truth, it is a large park gardenised, affording every variety of shrubbery, parterre, wood, avenue walks, shady dells, and open spaces, *à l'Anglaise*, planted with trees; all overshadowed by the huge frowning city walls heavy with the weight of centuries, indented and arched, with here and there an old tower looming in the background above the lofty trees. On entering, we passed along a lordly gravel walk bordered by a thoroughly Italian clipped hedge, from which other walks, bordered by other hedges, all seemingly interminable, opened out in every direction, forming charming vistas, and ending in richly-tinted old ramparts, or in some classic temple, or tomb, or statue. The only things wanting were fountains, of which, strange to say, near this city of living waters, there were none to be seen.

The other side of the broad walk was laid out in elegant flower-parterres.

It was quite a Watteau scene, and I expected every moment to see a party of ladies emerge from behind the high hedges, all rouged, and behooped, and bedizened, attended by flights of beaux radiant in powder and pearl white, with rapiers by their sides, enamelled snuff-boxes, fans, or *bonbonnières* in their hands, like a frontispiece to one of Molière's comedies; but no such "*precieuses ridicules*" appeared. There was the scene, the background; but the *dramatis personæ* were all in their graves, and their finery, as well as themselves, kindred dust, far away on the other side of the Alps.

When we reached the end of this approach, there appeared a little hill, which I ascended through pretty trimmed walks, to a charming kiosk at the summit, garlanded with creepers, and hemmed round with variegated aloes, their fat leaves turned down towards the ground. It was for all the world like a drop-scene in a play—only we, miserable sinners, spoilt the delusion by our modern dresses. Beyond was a noble view of modern Rome; for what view of the imperial city is not noble? At our feet bubbled a small stream into a great shell.

From the kiosk we descended into a dark ilex wood covering the further side of the rising ground. Here were ancient trees, old enough to have bent under the same hurricane that marked the hour of Cæsar's murder and clave the bronze wolf on the Capitol. In a dell at the bottom was a tiny lake, surrounding a moss-covered pile of ruined marble, radiantly green, from whence sprang up a liquid jet whose gurgling broke the silence and answered to the breeze rustling overhead. In an open space over this sweet dell, the casino (*Anglicè*, villa) appeared, whither the Princess Piombino repairs when she makes her *villeggiatura* and wishes to enjoy the beauties of nature, which the Italians have no notion of, not in the very least appreciating its beauties. The ladies especially, who never go out until the fall of the day, whatever be the season, care as little about this enchanting land, and the flowers, and the fragrant shade, and the delicious breezes, as a Venetian cares for a horse. They never walk, never wander about as we English delight to do, but order their carriage, and where that carriage cannot take them they never go. The casino is rather an ugly building, without the slightest pretension to anything except comfort. Within the inner hall are the famous frescoes of Guercino; his

"Aurora," and the "Night and Morning." The "Aurora" is, alas! but a milkmaid after Guido's goddess, and the black and brown piebalds but Flemish dray-horses in comparison with those ethereal steeds that skim through the azure main on the ceiling of the Rospigliosi saloons. However, it is a fine work, and has great force and justness of colouring. The various figures, too, emblematic of night, disappearing in different discomfited attitudes behind dark lowering clouds, all flying at the approach of day, are beautifully conceived. On either side of the hall are the figures of Night and Morning, both too well known to need more than a casual mention. I admire them much. The dead, heavy sleep of the one, whose eyes are closed over a manuscript she holds in her hand, while the owl, the night birds, and the sleeping child all tell of repose around her, contrasts capitally with the joyous, merry freshness of Day spreading his wings to the morning beams with a soul-inspiring glee, full of youth, hope, and promise. Other frescoes there are, landscapes of Domenichino and Guer-cino, no way remarkable except for the excessive greenness of the former's colouring—a defect I had already noted.

The house is a centre from which innumer-

able walks radiate through the delicious groves around. Before it wave great trees of cypress, tall and funereal as fancy can desire, mixed with immense solemn pines, whose twisted, knotted branches spread out in strange agonised shapes from the lofty trunks. High hedges border all the walks, lending a mysterious air to the grounds, suggestive of romantic meetings, and escapes, and assignations. Such hedges as these, tell-tale, hollow, and treacherous, must have divided Louis Quatorze from the still innocent La Vallière, when overhearing her confession of love and admiration in the gardens of Fontainebleau.

One walk there was under an avenue of ilex trees, forming a sombre shade, through which a stray sunbeam came struggling in as if by chance. Beyond was grass, over which the great boughs feathered down. On the other side the great *Muro torto* bounded the view. This walk was, I should think, two miles long, diversified by temples and statues at intervals. We followed it to a part of the grounds bordered by houses for preserving orange trees in winter, where the city wall had been utilised. The walls of ancient Rome and a modern conservatory!

“Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away!”

Time would fail me if I told all the wonders of this enchanted garden, beautiful as the "delectable country" in "Pilgrim's Progress."

Two or three large casini in the grounds we did not see at all. But we were allowed to enter the sculpture-gallery, where I saw an immense deal of modern restoration, and very little original antiquity. Some of the statues are interesting, but not many. One, which I took for Virginius in the act of sacrificing his daughter, whom he holds by one hand, proved to be a Gaul slaying no one knows whom, and so I lost my interest, particularly as the figure is altogether modern. Here is a good Bernini, "Plutus carrying off Proserpine," only she fights too much *de bonne foi* to be graceful, and he looks too satyr-like to be interesting. Still there is great power in it; and I recognised the same master-hand that called the "Daphne and Apollo" into life. There are some curious old Termini, almost the only originals in the collection.

On the whole I never spent a pleasanter day than at the Villa Lodovisi, wandering in its lovely groves.

CHAPTER X.

Audience of the Pope—Villa Doria Pamfili.

I AM just returned from an audience of the Pope, and sit down to write with all my impressions fresh on my mind. Two days ago a Papal dragoon made his appearance at my door very early in the morning, before I was up, to the infinite alarm of my Italian maid, who thought he had come to arrest me. He only bore, however, a very peaceable intimation printed on an extra large sheet of paper, notifying that I was to make my appearance at the Vatican, dressed in black, on the following Sunday at three o'clock.

Sunday came, and with it, in the morning, our English service, whereat seven hundred "*heretics*" offer up their prayers in every variety of fashionable silks and satins, with unmistakable Parisian bonnets *en suite*. The walls of the "upper chamber" appropriated by the "Protesters" of the nineteenth century are painted in a style apparently for making it look as little like a

church as possible. Everybody stares with that insolent knock-me-down air considered indicative of high *ton* by English *alone*, the manners of all other nations increasing in courtesy precisely in proportion to the rank of the individual. In good sooth, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, especially on the Continent.

By three o'clock I had dressed myself *selon les règles* for presentation to the head of the rival establishment, viz., in black, with a veil over my head à l'*Espagnole*—a very becoming *coiffure* by the way, which must, I think, have been introduced by Lucrezia Borgia or some other ecclesiastical belle, as being the prettiest and most taking costume her fertile imagination could devise. Up we drove to St. Peter's, where those glorious fountains shoot up in masses of molten silver towards the bright sun, typical, in their transparent purity, of the faith which martyrs on that very spot have sealed with their blood. I was afraid I was late, and so hurried along the marble corridor and up the regal staircase which extends from the colonnades to the interior of the Vatican. The quaint Swiss guard were lounging about and talking some utterly unintelligible *patois*. These men are regular "*bestie*," as the Italians say, and cannot be classed under any denomina-

tion of Christians; they have scarcely the attributes of humanity, and only understand *la raison de la force*, being gifted with particularly sharp elbows, as every one who has ever been jammed into a church crowd in St. Peter's or the Sistine Chapel knows to his cost. At the top of the steps stood a servant in crimson livery; a little farther on, another. All things have an end—so at last had the climbing up-stairs. I found myself landed in the first room of the picture-gallery, where San Romualdo and his companions are represented as ascending still farther *en route* to heaven in voluminous white dresses. Here I was kept waiting at least an hour, and so had abundant time to observe the crowd of ladies and ecclesiastics amongst whom I found myself. There was a group unmistakably French—two ladies as coquettishly dressed as black would allow, with veils which displayed rather than hid their faces. With them were two gentlemen, who fidgeted incessantly, used their handkerchiefs like minute-guns, and took snuff by handfuls. The ladies rattled away incessantly, like true Frenchwomen. Bless their souls, how they must talk in their sleep! Next to them was a party as decidedly English; they laughed and nudged each other, and made fun of everything, were very ill dressed, and

seemed utterly out of place. Then came a whole circle of French again, with two abbés and a small round boy, coloured in the face like a rosy pippin. These people had brought some excellent jokes along with them, and laughed so long and loud, the walls must have been scandalized, the priests heartily joining in the fun. Certainly the vicinity of the Holy Father had no effect upon them, nor were they sobered by the presence of two nuns or pilgrims who sat motionless beside them. These were two young creatures of most interesting appearance, with white cloths wrapped closely round their faces, precisely as the early masters, Perugino and his predecessors, represent the Mater Dolorosa. They wore dresses of dark brown stuff, with girdles of coarse knotted rope; crosses suspended round their necks, and coarse sandals binding their naked feet; in their hands they held broad-brimmed straw hats. I understood that they were destined to some mission in North Africa! Poor things! what devotion such a life requires! Immovable they sat, like monumental effigies, and as the deep shadows fell on the delicate face of the younger of the two, and a slight hectic colour flushed her ivory cheek, she looked like some pre-Raphaelite saint listening to the preaching of an Augustine or an Ambrose! I

wonder what they thought of the world and its vanities in the person of the French lady, flourishing an embroidered pocket-handkerchief and rattling her jewellery.

Dr. Johnson says, "An hour may be tedious, but never can be long"—a proposition I utterly controvert, for I found that division of time allotted to waiting exceedingly lengthy. I grew so cold and chilled, I felt actually turning into stone. When, however, hope seemed quite vain, and after even the pilgrim nuns had moved the quintessential part of an inch, steps were heard approaching; the curtain over the door was drawn aside, and the Pope's private chaplain, Monsignore A——, advanced into the room bareheaded, magnificently attired in light purple robes, with a great cross embroidered on his breast. Making a general bow to the assembled company, who rose at his entrance, he pronounced my "*rispettato nome*," as the Italians have it, and I made my exit through two or three empty rooms. Before entering the audience-gallery, called Degli Arazzi, from the glorious tapestries that hang along the walls, designed by Raphael, Monsignore A—— instructed me how to behave, and made me take off my gloves, which are never worn in the presence of Papal royalty. Beside the door stood another

valet in crimson. A bell rang, and I was told to advance. Pius stood at the top of a long gallery. On entering I knelt; on advancing to the middle of the room I knelt again; and at last, on arriving before him, a third time I knelt. All this is difficult to execute decorously. The aspect of the Pope is extremely benignant and pleasing; a halo of kindness and benevolence hovers around him, and the sweet smile on his calm, composed features immediately prepossesses one towards him. As I made the allotted genuflexions he seemed to wave his hand as though deprecating the formality, and bidding me freely advance. He looked almost pained at being approached so ceremoniously. On reaching his feet, at the third genuflexion, he presented me his bare hand, and I kissed a splendid ruby ring which he wears. Gregory, the late Pope, desired and submitted to having his foot kissed, the orthodox salutation at Papal audiences; but the amiable Pius prevents even such an attempt by frankly stretching forth his hand at once. He was dressed entirely in white, with a small cap on his head, and shoes of red, bearing a cross embroidered in gold, and stood beside a table at the top of the room. His white robes hanging in heavy folds around him, the tapestried walls of the gallery, his grave and

immovable attitude, one hand resting on the table, altogether conveyed the idea of an historical picture more than an actual scene. He addressed various questions to me respecting my own family affairs, and listened with interest to my replies, first asking me in which language, French or Italian, I could most easily express myself. His voice is soft and musical, as all know who have heard how sweetly he chants the high mass at St. Peter's; and his manner is full of paternal kindness and affability. "*Nella gioventù,*" said he, "*c' è sempre vanità; le tribolazioni vengano da Dio; pregiamo dunque che siano santificate per voi.*"

After some further talk he graciously dismissed me with a sweet smile, saying, "*Figlia mia, io ti benedico;*" upon which he again gave me his hand, which I of course received and kissed kneeling, as is the etiquette, and forthwith retreated, the Pope sounding a small hand-bell, on which the closed doors were swung open.

I returned with the most agreeable impression of his Holiness, and quite able to understand what Count L—, of the Guardia Nobile, felt when he said, "I love Pius far more than even my own father."

Among all the villas I have seen, none have

charmed me like the Doria Pamfili. On entering the great gates, three separate roads diverge in different directions through dense avenues and woods of ilex. In a dreamy and melancholy state of mind—for I had been vexed in the great city below—I chose the central one. I went on until I found myself in an open park, undulating in graceful lines, and rising into rounded heights crowned with wood, from which descended little valleys and deep nooks, black with shade, all sheltered by big weird pine trees, whose brown and naked trunks stood out clearly against the blue sky; for it was a mellow, bright day in the early spring. Tracks, rather than roads, broke the verdant carpeting all around. From the summit of one hillock, and under the shadow of the overarching ilex branches, a charming prospect opened out towards Albano, with the long solemn line of the Campagna stretching away to Ostia, and that now untrodden shore where once mighty vessels rode superbly at anchor, bearing those Roman or Carthaginian warriors whose footsteps trod in blood. From the hillock I perceived a garden beneath me, and the casino, or house, with its high terrazzo. I descended into the garden, and wandered about as if under a magic spell, not a soul, not even a dog, was to be seen,

and no sound broke the musical murmur of the fountains in their marble basins. Great plots of ground were filled with waxy camellias, some pure white, others rosy red, peeping out from the rich shining leaves: and beds of violets of every hue made the very air heavy with their sweet perfume. Beside them grew long rows and plots of oranges, laden with that same glowing fruit which must have tempted our first mother, rather than the pale apple, in the gardens of Paradise. Anon I mounted a double flight of steps, by a great stream spouting out from some marble devices of dolphins and sea-gods, and reached an upper terrace-garden immediately under the casino. The sun's rays here, in January, were oppressive, and the thousand orange-trees dotted about and ranged against the walls rejoiced in the heat, opening their golden bosoms to be warmed by Phœbus himself. In the depths of the wall were cool seats, and purling fountains dashing down through creepers, and moss, and plants, and disappearing one knew not whither. Hard by, to the left, long flights of steps led from the hill above down lower than the garden where I stood. Along the ridge of this hill grew the sacred ilex trees; in the lower garden were the flowers; and as their sweet breath uprose to greet me, visions of angels

radiant with celestial brightness, ascending and descending, seemed to glide before me.

I left the solitary garden where Nature reigned supreme, and reached a large green plateau occupying the summit of the gentle eminence. Here the pine wood stretched away into dells and vales far beyond, leading the eye through perspectives of unspeakable beauty. The grass was dotted with the loveliest flowers: anemones of all colours, the snowy leaves shading into red, and purple, with pink petals; star-like crocuses with yellow hearts; pink hepaticas; and bold, stalwart daisies, like young sunflowers, courting the invigorating sun—a carpet fresh from the woofs of heaven, embroidered by Nature alone, and scented by the spirit of morning with her balmiest breath.

The house contains a few pictures and some solemn statues; but above, from the terrazzo, whither we were led by an antiquated crone, may be seen the most wondrous panorama that ever greeted human eyes. Below stands the great basilica of St. Peter's, within whose walls one tries to think repose all that is mortal of that often erring but attached disciple to whom Christ intrusted the spiritual keys; its colonnades—its fountains—its courts—its pillars—its vast dome—revealed in all their immense proportions. Heavens!

what a noble sight! Behind uprose the stern solemn line of Mount Soracte, standing alone like an island on an earthy ocean, disdaining its Alpine fellows, who cluster and crouch together on either hand, leaving it in solitary grandeur. Then there is Tivoli, wrapped in the Sabine Hills as in a mantle, their summits covered with snow, glistening in the sunshine far up in the azure sky. Then a deep valley, and further on lie Albano, and Castel Gondolfo, and Rocca di Papa, and Frascati—each like a white blossom nestling in the purple mountains; and then the long straight line marking the sea-shore, and the bright mystery of distant ocean. What a circle of loveliness! What a zone of beauty!

CHAPTER XI.

Italian Interiors—Churches: San Lorenzo in Damaso; San Marco—
Baths of Caracalla—The Opera.

To us prejudiced islanders there is nothing more uncongenial and incomprehensible than domestic life in Italy. In high society there is sameness and monotony all over the world, and good breeding, whether in London or Rome, teaches people to tone down and subdue all outward demonstration to the recognised standard of aristocratic reserve. In company, the fiery Italian becomes composed, the loquacious Frenchman silent, and the thorough-bred Englishman doubly impenetrable. But at home, nature peeps out undisguised, and one sees and hears of funny things occasionally.

The Countess G—— had a husband—a good, quiet man, who gave her no sort of trouble; indeed, she was apt to forget his very existence occasionally. This forgetfulness was carried so far, that in course of time she picked up a cavalier,

who turned the honourable duo of matrimony into the dishonourable trio of cicisbeism. The Italian husband cared very little about the matter, and the household went on harmoniously as before. In course of time the lady grew weary of her extra spouse, dismissed him, and took another. The quiet Italian husband remained impassible, until he found that cavaliere the second, of a more excitable and unaccommodating nature than his predecessor, upset the domestic economy of the house, and, in particular, kept the dinner waiting. This was an unpardonable delinquency; and the husband, now awake to a sense of his wrongs, piteously complained to a friend in these terms:—"My wife's first cavaliere," said he, "was a gallant' uomo—un bravo ragazzo. I rejoiced to see him. But this, her second amico, is a *birbante*. Since he has come, there is no comfort at home. I wish he were away, and the first back again. *Bisogna che ne parlo colla moglie*. She shall dismiss him, or we must separate. I must have my dinner at the proper time." These are facts, strange but true, and indicate an odd standard of morals.

Other things of a droller complexion often occur, when the singularities committed, however suspicious, are entirely innocent. The Marchesa

R—— is a woman about forty, of most pious sentiments, and a devoted invoker of the whole circle of saints. She regularly says her prayers by the calendar, and follows the *quarant' ore* into the obscurest churches. Her abode is an old tumble-down palace in the environs of the city, where she lives on a mere nothing, happy as a queen. The rooms are unencumbered with carpets or furniture, the only superabundance being frescoes, and great gaunt arm-chairs keeping guard along the walls in grim and gloomy state. Fire there is none, even in the depth of winter, that being considered a useless and unhealthy luxury by Italians.

The other day I went to see her, and was ushered into the bare reception-rooms by a ragged boy and a dirty woman. Her niece advanced to meet me, and, after the usual greetings and extravagant expressions of joy considered an indispensable welcome in Italy, she said her aunt was ill in bed, but would receive me notwithstanding. I was led into an immense room, equally devoid of furniture, save a small iron bed standing in the centre, without any attempt at curtains. Here lay the marchesa in a rather dirty nightcap; while at the other end of the room, to my astonishment, appeared a priest dressed in a black *sottana*,

amusing himself with a dog. I was about to retreat at this strange apparition in "my lady's chamber," when she called out a cordial "Buon giorno," and begged me not to mind Fra L——, who was her priest, and didn't signify. She then presented us. I sat down beside her bed, and the Frate returned to his amusement with the dog. After we had talked some time, she requested him to come nearer and join in our conversation, which he did, seating himself, *sans cérémonie*, on the marchesa's bed. She did not look the least surprised, and the good man, who had a most amiable and innocently grave expression of countenance, appeared as unconscious as a child. After we had chatted for some time I withdrew, wondering within myself what I should next see to astonish me in the penetralia of an Italian interior.

One side of a spacious piazza is occupied by the spreading façade of a magnificent palazzo, within whose arched and wide-extending *cortile* deep shadows come and go as the light shoots fitfully down. That palace and *cortile*—designed by Bramante, uncle of Raphael—and the broad staircase descending into it from the first floor, are noted as the scene of a fearful tragedy, too recent, however, in the memories of men to have

acquired the same degree of superstitious awe imparted to deeds of murder mystified and deepened by the legendary horrors of long years of fearful remembrance. On those stairs was Count Rossi assassinated—into that *cortile* his mangled body was thrown—and out of that door was he borne, unshriven and unsung, to his long home. Included in the façade is the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso, also built after the designs of Bramante. This church is an exception to the generality one meets with in Rome, being dark, gloomy, and sombre. A vestibule forming the first division, with low, rounded arches, is Gothic in style. Here are two altars—on one side that of the sacrament. The sun was shining gloriously outside when I entered, making the deep gloom and mystic repose of the church all the more striking. The transition was like passing into another and a holier world—light, atmosphere, colouring, all were different. The sunbeams found their way aslant through a crimson curtain to the sacramental altar, tinged, as it seemed, in their roseate rays with that divine stream which links our souls to Him who, by the shedding of his precious blood, opened that river of living waters along whose current our frail souls can alone hope to reach the heavenly country.

There was an indistinct mist over the remainder of the church. Groups of kneeling figures clustered round the various altars, and told their beads under the deep shade of the heavy pillars. A monk, a nun, bowed in devotion, were here and there dotted about among the crowd, their long black or brown robes giving them a ghostly look, as of dwellers in the tombs rather than flesh and blood. At the extremity of the side aisle, near the high-altar, is a monument to the memory of the ill-starred Rossi, executed by Tenerani, with a fine bust in the centre full of individuality, underneath is an inscription simply recording his miserable death. Tenerani must have laboured *con amore* for his unfortunate compatriot, Rossi and himself being both natives of the marble-girt town of Carrara. In the sacristy—within which there were assembled about thirty priests, all talking and laughing, offering an unpleasing contrast to the calm repose of the worshippers without—is a grand statue, by Maderno, of San Carlo Borromeo, that saint of saints, whose memory Rome carefully cherishes. No other monument struck me as remarkable.

Gay, light, graceful, and elegant is the beautifully-proportioned church of San Marco behind the Piazza di Venezia, at the top of the Corso.

Rejoicing in the richest marbles, bathed in the bright sunlight, all here is gloriously gorgeous. Elegant pillars of a precious and beautiful red marble support the entablature, behind which are piers of a pale grey marble, affording a background and a relief to the brighter colour, delightful to the eye by the charming contrast afforded by the harmonious blending of the two shades. The entablature above is brilliant with frescoes; the side altars radiant with every device and ornament, monumental and artistic; all, however adapted with admirable taste, and forming a whole magnificent, but not meretricious. In its style San Marco is perfect, and did Rome not possess such inexhaustible treasures in the way of churches, such an edifice would be celebrated as it really deserves. But what is mere decoration, however admirable, in comparison with those immortal works of genius that, on bare and unadorned walls, bring thousands from the uttermost parts of the earth to gaze and to admire? There are some mosaics of the stiffest and most deplorable Byzantine pattern, unutterably hideous in their dolorous, long-faced rigidity. Pictures there are, too, but of no great interest. It is the whole—the entire effect—that makes this church so striking.

After passing the Coliseum and proceeding along the Via di San Gregorio (so named from a church built on the spot where once stood his ancestral palace) through the arch of Constantine, there is not a step without deep interest. The soil turns up rare marbles of every variety. Colombarie constantly occur, and ruins crop out in all directions—in the midst of vineyards, at the cross-roads, or incorporated into modern buildings; while gigantic cactuses, and smooth-leaved orange trees peep over the high walls, with here and there a solitary palm tree rising out of great plantations of enormous reeds. Nothing can be more gloomily solitary than this district of ancient Rome—more suggestive of the past glories of her fallen state. One treads the soil, feeling that an Apollo or a Venus, or perhaps more inimitable treasures than the Belvidere or the Medici, lie buried under one's footsteps.

After proceeding about half a mile along these *lugentes campi*, a huge, far-spreading mass of ruins rises abruptly into sight, on slightly elevated ground, looking much like the broken walls of a feudal castle, the rents of time causing the isolated fragments to stand singly forth like turrets, embattlements, and tottering towers, holding on to the decrepit mass by wide Etruscan-looking arches,

formed of great blocks of stone—a strange, shapeless pile, on whose frowning surface the ivy and clematis embroider themselves in waving patterns, wreathing with annual freshness the sharp hard lines cutting against the deep blue sky. The carriage turned up one of those odd Roman lanes bordered by high walls, that look as if they could lead to nothing but a rubbish-heap or a horse-pond, and yet which conceal such treasures scattered along their sides. In a few moments we were under the shadow of the great ruin, and after desperately ringing at a wooden portal, at last found ourselves in the roofless but majestic halls of what once were the Baths of Caracalla. Certainly it is the only Roman ruin above-ground worthy of competing with the Coliseum, and may, perhaps, be preferred by those admiring a ruder and more chaotic mass of positively fabulous extent. All is desolation. One's footsteps echo mournfully under the great arches—grass grows in the vast halls—shrubs and creepers tapestry the roofless walls—wild roses blossom in the place where emperors have trodden. Still, all is grand and majestic in decay, and I felt positively overwhelmed by the stupendous ruins. One immense hall opens into another through gigantic arches in endless succession. After passing through

several, a great space, too huge to be called a hall, is pointed out as the swimming-bath, with a small apartment in one corner used formerly for dressing, where now remnants of heads and cornices, capitals and pillars, lie collected. From hence we mounted a staircase in one of the towers, repaired on the ancient model, with such high precipitous steps that there can be no disputing the fact of the length of classic Roman legs; I would only recommend any antiquarian troubled with a doubt to try for himself. From the summit I looked down among the ruins below and around me, and traced the once splendid halls where the barbarous Caracalla and the luxurious Heliogabalus had whiled away their vicious idleness. On a level with me were arches and turrets, and great isolated masses of the outer wall, huge and shapeless as though an earthquake had tossed them. No one who has not seen it can conceive what a stupendous ruin it is. Here Shelley meditated amid the silence of the past; nor was it possible for ancient Rome to offer a more melancholy and solemn retirement for a poet's musing place. In the spring-time the winds breathe soft and low in mysterious whispers, their violence tempered by the solid walls, while the sun casts bright lights and shadows, and generates a delicious temperature.

A fine view of the distant city is obtained through an arch in the outer wall. To the left stretches the level Campagna towards Ostia, broken only by the great arches of the Claudian aqueduct and by the lovely basilica of St. Paolo fuori le Mura, like a mourning bride, desolate and forlorn in the fever-stricken plain. On descending, I passed into another immense hall, under arches expansive enough to span a river, where are some wonderfully-preserved mosaics near the wall, marking the place of the private baths for the use of the emperors and greatest patricians. These mosaics (once, perhaps, trodden by the wretched tyrant Caracalla himself, fresh from some horrid murder, his hands stained by a brother's blood) are as bright as ever. Around the walls, midway, are the remains of a gallery, whence the combats of the gladiators were viewed by the court whilst the deified monster bathed. Then comes the vast Pinacotheca, or library, with niches for shrines and statues, the soil still upheaved and broken on the very spots where were found the Farnese Hercules and famous Torso of the Vatican; and how many other statues may yet lie buried there, vainly awaiting an enterprising generation! Around this hall are the remains of a similar gallery for viewing the sports of the athletes. How gorgeous

this Pinacotheca must have appeared when decked with statues, pillars, paintings, and stucco, the vaulted roof glorious in gold and colours! Now the damp wind sighs through the desolate halls, and the toads hop over the openings from which fallen statues have been excavated.

A whole party of young priests, having divested themselves of all unnecessary clerical costume, and tied pocket-handkerchiefs over their heads, were playing vigorously at ball in the sunshine; one or two, more studious, coned their books, seated on the great stones scattered around. A new-married couple wandered listlessly about—a pale, fair-haired Saxon girl, who saw nothing of the ruins that was not reflected in her husband's eyes, on whom she gazed unceasingly with long looks of love. He, alas! looked bored, and listened vacantly to the tiresome explanations of a *valet de place*—an animal highly objectionable everywhere, but specially so in a scene where “he that runs may read,” the iron finger of Time having traced the history all too well.

There is every arrangement visible still for the warm or vapour baths, funnels for passing the heated water, and apertures for the evaporation of the steam. Altogether there are eight halls, and the extreme circuit is said to have been five

miles and a half, including the adjoining circus erected by the same wretched son of Severus who barbarously sacrificed his brother, the unhappy Geta, to his ambition. His atrocious character is stamped on the many busts that yet remain of him, all remarkable for sinister deep-set eyes, and a diabolical grin, quite satyr-like. I must not forget to mention that one of the finest specimens of ancient mosaics was found in these baths, representing athletes, masques, and wrestlers, all hideously ugly and unpleasing, but admirably executed, and wonderfully preserved. This mosaic is now shown in one of the halls of the Lateran Palace, where, transported from its proper site, it loses all suggestive interest.

No ruins of ancient Rome have impressed me more than the solitary halls I have endeavoured to describe, and I hope, as the spring advances, often to return and make out more distinctly the site of the two temples dedicated to Apollo and Esculapius, the *genii tutelares* of the place. But I shall look in vain for the great court, surrounded by porticoes that once adorned the inner edifice; and for the Odeon, whence music woke the echoes of the endless galleries and corridors; and for the shady groves of palm trees waving over the gymnasium for running and wrestling in fine weather;

and also for the greater outer halls where poets declaimed and philosophers lectured. Nought remains but lonely vineyards extending on every side, where the patient mouse-coloured oxen of the Campagna turn over the fat, heavy soil with a plough so antique in shape, it might serve as a pattern for what Virgil described in his *Georgics*.

The very existence of theatres at Rome is ignored by the Pope and his tonsured ministers the cardinals, spite of the immense *manifesti* that meet their eyes at the corner of every street, and the glaring fact that at this particular moment certainly some half-a-dozen occupy the idleness of the Romans every evening. The truth is, that Rome is one of the most fastidious places in Italy about acting and music; nothing is tolerated but the very best, and executed in first-rate style. During the Carnival the Apollo is *the* opera-house, situated near the Ponte St. Angelo, almost under the shadow of St. Peter's, so that music, profane and sacred, respond to each other across the muddy Tiber.

A new opera appeared the other night, and I went because I had a box sent me. The theatre was crammed inside with company, and nearly surrounded outside by Papal dragoons, bearing

drawn swords in their hands, and great white cloaks draping about them like togas, the heavy folds falling over their horses' flanks, and looking uncommonly ghostly in the dark. Inside, the passages are guarded by more modernly-attired protectors, smelling furiously of tobacco. The theatres at Rome, spite of the goodly company they contain, are the dirtiest, blackest, most unsavoury places, I believe, in the whole world. Sometimes one's box is filled with such an overwhelming compound that it is indispensable to open the door, but as a soldier immediately comes and looks in suspiciously, and mounts a kind of guard over one, there is no help but to close it. The Apollo is no exception among its fellows, and is as dark and dirty as years of filth can make it. No wandering breath of fresh air ever strayed in there; it would have been frightened long before in the stairs and corridors, and either died, or got out again to moan over the wrongs done it among the richly-laden orange trees and myrtles in the Pope's garden at the Vatican close by.

Up and up stairs we mounted until our box was reached and the door opened, which species of mysterious suspense and expectation preparatory to entering the penetralia of a theatre always

makes my heart beat somewhat quicker. I looked round, and found a nobly-proportioned house, as large perhaps as Covent Garden. If it had only been clean, one might have admired it, but the walls and the ceiling were grimed with the accumulated smoke of some fifty years at least, and the great central chandelier gave so little light that it was difficult to see anything before the footlights were raised. The house was immensely full, the boxes looking like an overcrowded flower-vase, as the pink, and white, and blue draperies of the fair lapped over the edges like great leaves, and here a pretty hand protruded, and there a rounded shoulder. But honour to whom honour is due: no one here goes to the opera dressed in that state of classic nudity in favour at home, where, as Gavarni says, "*Les Anglaises se décolletent jusqu'aux jarretières.*" The dragoons would decidedly be summoned in such case.

As for the opera, I have not the wildest surmise what it was about; the ballet was a regular burlesque, being no other than the sorrows of Mary Queen of Scots done into dancing. Oh shade of Robertson, Froude, and other learned and grave historians, who have devoted such ponderous tomes to elucidate her history and defend her problematical virtue, what would have

been your outraged feelings could you have seen your poetical heroine reduced to a squab, broad, red-faced woman, of surpassing ugliness, with staring, bead-like eyes, and a great wart on the expanse of her forehead, gesticulating with furious and frantic vehemence, throwing abroad her arms and legs as if they did not belong to her trunk, but moved quite independently on springs? No mad woman escaped from Bedlam could have been more excited. Anywhere else than in Italy surprise would have possessed one at the sacrilegious prostitution of sweet Mary's name; but after seeing *The Prophet* at Florence perform capers and *entrechats*, and dance himself into the good graces of the three Anabaptists, I could wonder at nothing. I believe, if the creation of the world was considered a good *coup* for a ballet, an Italian would be found to arrange the *rôles* and the *pas seuls*, and an Italian would be found to applaud it, provided only the *mise en scène* was sufficiently voluptuous to tickle their fancy. Darnley, a dark, lugubrious man, discovers a fact about which historians are still in doubt, but with the peculiar perspicacity and penetration proper to the *dramatis personæ* of a ballet, he cuts the Gordian knot of ages, and decides as to the guilt of Mary with Bothwell—a lusty, stalwart knight in

full armour, who does unutterable things with his sword, which he continually swings over his head, leaping about the while like nothing human but a Red Indian.

The Italian idea of Scotch costume is exceedingly obscure, as I had already remarked in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In the present instance the claim of the performers to be considered inhabitants of Old Gaul consisted of a variety of tight, coloured bandages, tied round their legs like garters. Mary is put in prison for her flirtation with Bothwell, who, together with his followers, penetrates there, and swears to liberate her, in order to accomplish which feat some of them descend into the bowels of the earth (trap 2, right-hand wing), and with many grimaces and contortions place a train of gunpowder all ready for explosion. Darnley appears, wearing an angry brow generally, and particularly towards the Queen, who really deserves all the abuse she gets, for her atrocious ugliness; he then enters the palace, and Mary conveniently faints, while Catherine Seaton, a skinny, middle-aged woman with scanty petticoats, executes a despairing fandango around her until—hey!—presto—away!—up blows the palace, covering the stage with fragments, and the electric light rising out of the ruins makes the house look

like broad day, quite putting the yellow candles to shame. Of what the electric light is typical—unless it be the supposed soul of Darnley—I cannot conceive; but who asks for congruity and consistency in a ballet? Not *Italians*, certainly; so the pit applauds, and the soldiers cry “Bravo!” and we all go off in a very good humour out by the banks of the dark Tiber, still rushing to the sea through the dark night with the same rapid current, whether modern folly or pagan rites “rule the hour.”

CHAPTER XII.

The Cupola of St. Peter's and Sistine Chapel—The Museum at the Lateran—San Pietro in Vincolo and the "Moses."

A GREAT deal has been said and written about the ascent of the cupola of St. Peter's in which I cannot agree; and as I went up yesterday, I conceive myself—minnow though I be—entitled to an opinion among the great tritons of the goosetail. From the church we entered a door to the left, where sits a functionary to whom the ticket is delivered up; each holder of a ticket being responsible for the safety of the party of five which it admits. A broad staircase, *a cordoni* (meaning that there are no steps, but a steep inclined plane, to ascend), circles round and round; a horse or donkey, biped or quadruped, might go up with perfect ease, so gradual is the ascent. Many emperors, kings, and princesses have so far condescended to stretch their royal legs, as is set forth on the marble slabs that line the walls. We arrived on the roof, which is like the roof of any

other great building, before we were conscious we had done anything. I saw no fountains or workshops save a few sheds in corners, and I could quite realise that I was walking on a roof, and not on some debatable country, extending to a fabulous distance, midway between earth and heaven. I did not see anything astonishing except the size, for which one comes prepared by a knowledge of the vast proportions of St. Peter's. One circumstance is wonderful, and I note the fact, that upwards of six or seven thousand a year is annually expended in keeping the exterior in repair. Standing there, I could not but contrast in my own mind the bald and bare aspect of the leaden plain before me, broken only by the vaulting arch of the central nave, and the huge dimensions of the statues over the façade—great clumsy giants of Bernini parentage—with the delicate tracery, the forest of airy pinnacles and spires, each different and all beautiful; the stars, the crosses, the bosses, pure in colour as when drawn from the marble bosoms of the Carrara mountains, the world of statues, the long vistas of overarching supports, light and bold as the recollection of a dream, seen on the roof of the wondrous cathedral at Milan—that stupendous yet graceful fabric, which in bridal whiteness challenges the snowy

Alps whose crested summits, mingling with the clouds, close in the Lombard plains. There, as I contemplated the elegant confusion of the roof, at certain points perfectly symmetrical, at others absolutely labyrinthine in confusion, like the Fata Morgana turned topsy-turvy, I was not for an instant reminded of the solidity of the structure, but my eye dwelt alone on the incomparable decorations, the inimitable coquetry with which the solid walls are festooned, surmounted by the arrow-like spire dashing upwards into the heavens with a transparent lightness quite miraculous; the walls being open and the staircase visible, as it were, in the air, twisting up cork-screw fashion between the apertures, looking altogether of a material more akin to the vapoury clouds than marble and stone. I must, therefore, commit the delinquency of declaring that I prefer the exterior of Milan Cathedral as decidedly as I do the interior, with its deep, half-revealed Gothic aisles, to the gaudy trappings and glaring light of St. Peter's. But to return.

The great cupola of St. Peter's rises perpendicularly from the roof in a manner so sudden that ascent appears impossible; but entering a small door at the base, we addressed ourselves to the labour, proceeding crab-wise up flight after

flight of stairs, one-sided and lurching, like a ship in a gale of wind, and making one feel about as giddy. These curiously-shaped ascents run between the exterior coating and the interior vaulting of the cupola, and are bent to follow its arching form. At length we gained the gallery of the dome, and looked down from that immense elevation on the church beneath, and on the altar and tomb of the apostles. The four figures of the Evangelists—to my thinking incomparably the finest mosaics in the world—now appeared in their true gigantic proportions. We were the pigmies, and the people below, like dots, darkened the bright marble pavement; while the great letters in the inscription round the entablature grew taller than the tallest man that ever lived. Above was the superb arched roof of burnished gold, covered with mosaics; a glorious firmament, sown with sparkling stars, and a radiance quite celestial, as the sun poured down through the central aperture, lighting up the angels, apostles, saints, and martyrs, who from above keep eternal watch and ward over the sacred tomb below, where burn by night and day the emblematic lamps. The celestial hierarchy around me, prefiguring the elders surrounding the great white throne, seemed planted there in expectation of the last trumpet.

Some more steep climbing up eccentric stairs, and the great outer balcony was reached, and the noble view stretched around. From this belvidere the Eternal City narrows to a space small as the palm of a man's hand, intersected by a thread of water flowing beside the tombs and ruins and the busy haunts of men, towards the desolate Maremma, where a visible curse lies heavy on the land—a curse of sterility, and poverty, and sickness, where life becomes a living death. Rome lies like a corpse at one's feet. The glory of the seven hills is humbled, and their undulations are scarcely perceptible at the foot of the vast basilica, pre-eminent in height and dignity. Twice mistress of the world, Rome can now only be deemed queen of the past. The murmurs of the multitude, confounded with the hum of the fountains, were borne aloft in the sighings of the scented breeze which fanned the orange-terraced gardens of the Vatican. How can vain words do justice to this noblest panorama of the land revered by all mankind as the centre from whence power, arts, religion, laws, history, beauty, bravery, civilisation have risen—the Cybele of Europe?

At this altitude the volcanic Alban mountains, veiled in deep forests, and the calcareous summits of the Sabine heights, looked but low hills, mark-

ing the limits of that vast upheaving plain, the Campagna, nowhere level, yet nowhere precipitous, bounded on one side by the Tyrrhenian Sea, on the other by more distant mountains, dry, naked, solitary, a lonely pine here and there crowning a rounded hill. I thought on all the theories extant accounting for the strange peculiarities of the Roman Campagna; that it had been once an ocean, those heights its shore; Mount Soracte a rocky island, against whose sides the roaring billows beat; that Nature had formed it from the beginning for a great battle-field, whereon the destinies of mankind were to be fought out as long as time endured; that it had once contained countless volcanoes, whose united action formed the unnatural substratum of lava of which it consists. None of these fancies pleased me save the battle-field—that is the impress the heavy lines bear, as though the very hills had hardened after having gazed for untold centuries on blood and horror, death and destruction, where powers, nations, and potentates have fallen, “the Goth, the Christian, time, war, flood, and fire”—the pale faces of the slain turned upwards, making death hideous. The islands on the sea towards Ostia were visible, the clouds of morning mist obscuring the empyrean blue—all, save heaven,

was dead, brown, dried up, a very skeleton of Nature.

Some persons are possessed with a foolish ambition of climbing up into the ball, which will hold about five persons, in an atmosphere resembling the black-hole of Calcutta. I have a desire to be, rather than to seem, and never go anywhere for the mere sake of saying that I have been there, so I gazed at the scene around me, and allowed others to laugh and joke at the mishaps that befell them.

After our descent we strolled into the Sistine Chapel, rigidly guarded by a Cerberus looking out for francs. The interior is by no means large, yet there is a chastened elegance in its aspect quite peculiar—solemn, yet rich, and admirably blending in general effect. I never could endure the "Last Judgment;" it is to me a scene of unutterable Titanic confusion; no peace, no joy, no hope, but all terror, horror, dread, foreshortening, and anatomy. Indeed, it requires no little study to realise which are the sheep and which the goats, so generally uneasy do the entire mass of saints and sinners appear. A great work of art may be invaluable as a study to cognoscenti, and yet most unpleasing and unpalatable to the multi-

tude. The sombre brown of the figures on the blue background reminded me of the grave-like colouring of all nature in the prospect I had just quitted. The attitude of the Saviour has every attribute of a Jupiter Tonans rejoicing in the chaos he again calls forth for the destruction of the creatures he had formed; and the graceful action of the Madonna, veiling herself at the sight of the sufferings she cannot avert, may *sound* poetical on paper, but is quite lost in the agonised mass around her. To me the charm of the Sistine Chapel consists in the beautiful frescoes that adorn its walls, on whose calm outlines the eye rests with complacency after the uneasy action of the "Last Judgment." Beautiful is Perugino's delineation of our Lord's temptation; the three movements combined into one picture with the quaint arrangement common to the early schools. Beautiful also, perhaps finest of all his works, is "Christ delivering the Keys to Peter," the general arrangement and grouping of which served as the precise model to Raphael in his lovely picture of the "Spozalizio," now in the Brera at Milan. Here, too, Ghirlandaio, Roselli, Botticelli, and Signorelli, the great fathers of the Florentine school, have striven in noble emulation, and united to produce a result not only artistically of

the highest excellence, but delightful and admirable in the eyes of all who crowd hither from every quarter of the civilised globe.

The folly of endeavouring to form separate galleries of sculpture in the same city as the Vatican Museum is apparent. Even Rome, were all her subterranean treasures revealed, could never hope to form another such temple to sculpture. The overcrowded rooms of the Capitol Museum present an aspect of confusion proper only to a lumber loft, while the bare walls of the spacious halls at the Lateran are in the other extreme, and appear so nude and unfurnished, it is quite desolating to look on them. Why should not the gems of both collections be placed in that boundless Vatican, whose countless galleries and corridors might yet receive thousands of fresh statues, and still have room, and to spare? On the whole, I was more pleased with the Lateran collection than with that of the Capitol, where excepting the "Dying Gladiator"—if gladiator we are to call him, with that cord and horn—and the "Flora and Faun," I never could see much to admire. At the Lateran I was enchanted with the Braschi "Antinous"—a colossal statue of miraculous beauty, second only to the "Apollo Belvidere"—if, indeed, second to that. Antinous

appears in the character of Osiris, crowned with ivy berries and leaves, a lotus-flower placed in the centre of the garland—a rich, varied, and classical head-gear of the utmost beauty. The hall appropriated to the family of Augustus is wonderfully grand and interesting. Ranged around the walls stand the solemn statues of the imperial house in calm majestic attitudes, monumental in character. The statue of Livia has a lovely face, and stands in an attitude full of grace and dignity, with one hand upraised; the flowing robes and stately presence breathing a very atmosphere of imperial majesty tempered by womanly sweetness. Augustus and Drusus wear the eternal togas—those classical bedgowns I so detest. Tiberius appears crowned with oak and acorns, a face full of youthful beauty and godlike repose, passionless as the calm surface of the summer leaves. Who could imagine such vices lay dormant under so winning an exterior? Agrippina bears her proud character and great beauty stamped on her lofty brow. Her attitude is less pleasing than that of Livia, masculine determination preponderating over more feminine charms. Two statues of Germanicus, habited in full armour, express an amiable, gentle character, appealing to our sympathies by its unassuming

yet manly expression of perfect goodness. His head is unadorned, and both statues are of high value, from the admirable likeness and perfect state of preservation in which they have come down to us.

Very interesting is the rough Dacian, mentioned by Murray, with the sculptor's points still visible. But most of all was I struck by an admirable basso-relievo on a marble tomb, of Orestes pursued by the Furies—wildly horrible in their hideous aspect—his murder of Clytemnestra and her lover in the centre—and, in the other corner, the shade of Agamemnon, an old man, wrapped in a deep, mysterious cloak, with a hood over his face, inciting Orestes to revenge. This is one of the very finest basso-relievos in Rome. Opposite is an inferior work, the destruction of Niobe's children, on another tomb. Near by are two splendid marble pillars of Pavonazzetto, taken from the bed of the Tiber, whose beauty suggests the question, What must Rome have been, avened with such colonnades?

One of the finest statues here is that of Sophocles, bearing the name of the Antonelli family inscribed on the pedestal. It was discovered by a curious accident. A poor man, working in his vineyard, near the campagna of Conte Antonelli,

brother of the cardinal, came upon a block of stone that resisted all his blows. He dug and dug until he discovered a statue, which he threw upon *terra firma*. Off he goes to his *patrone* the conte, to relate to him the occurrence. But, says he, "*cosa importa a me?*" I have neither a cart to carry it, nor horses nor oxen to drag the cart; *via!* there it must lie. Perhaps, however, *sua eccellenza* the conte would give him something for it?" The conte returned his query like a Quaker, by asking another—"What did he want for the thing?" At last, after a great deal of *discorreria*, fifteen scudi were agreed on (three pounds), and the contadino went away gloriously contented. The statue was dragged to the *cortile* of the count's casino, and lay forgotten in a corner until Gregory, the late pope, during one of his provincial progresses, passed by Terracina and breakfasted with Count Antonelli. Passing through the *cortile*, the papal eyes turned on the recumbent statue. *Ma che cosa abbiamo qui? Qualche cosa di bello mi pare.*" So the statue was raised and examined, and pronounced entirely excellent. The count begged to present the fifteen scudi worth to his Holiness, who gladly accepted the offer, and ordered the statue to be packed off to Rome, where it was cleaned and

repaired by benevolent antiquarians, who, acting as sponsors, named it Sophocles, under which title it now appears, the principal attraction of the third best gallery in Rome—and all for fifteen scudi! The thing *now* is priceless.

The interior court of the Lateran Palace is surrounded above and below with an arched colonnade, richly painted in fresco, which produces a very noble effect. Indeed, the whole building is grand and palatial in the extreme forming as it does a kind of wing or addenda to the most imposing church in Rome, far more perfect externally than St. Peter's however inferior to the great leviathan in size. I ascended the stairs, and found the upper suite of apartments of fine proportions, and decorated with much splendour, but desolate, damp, and forlorn. They are now the cradle of an infant picture-gallery, but as yet in a hopelessly infantine state. I remarked one picture by Caravaggio, that Molière of painting, "The Tribute Money," as fine as anything I remember of his works. There, too, is a sweet "Annunciation," by the Cavaliere Arpino, where Mary is represented as the simple gentle maiden one loves to picture her, not the made-up simpering beauty to which she is too often degraded by even the first masters. Her

youthfulness and freshness here are most engaging, and quite charmed my eyes, accustomed to the glare and grandeur of Parmegiano and Domenichino, who never dream but of the Queen of Heaven. The picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence of George IV. is a tremendous affair. I never saw an individual so overladen with orders, chains, ribbon, and velvet, even at the Carnival.

During Lent there are what are called *stazioni* for prayers at all the old out-of-the-way churches; and if they possess miraculous treasures, they are displayed for adoration on these occasions. I have been to-day to San Pietro in Vincolo, where the *stazione* was held, and the church open all day. The road to this church is the identical *Via Scelerata*, so named because here the wicked Tullia, daughter of King Servius, drove over the body of her aged father, murdered by Lucius, her husband, son of the banished Tarquinius. Servius was slain on this very road, situated on the Esquiline, which, when Tullia heard, she mounted her chariot and drove to the Forum, where, unabashed and untouched by her father's bloody death, she hailed her husband king! As she returned home the body of her father lay in the way. The driver of her chariot stopped short, and showed Tullia where her father lay in his

blood, but she *bade him drive on*. The chariot rolled over the body, and she went to her home with her father's blood on the wheels of her chariot.

Flocks of pedestrians and numbers of carriages made the dust fly in perfect clouds about the solitary lanes and walled-in alleys in the vicinity. All the neighbourhood was up and alive. Drove of beggars sit or stand grouped on the steps, and clink their boxes and ask for alms for the sake of the Madonna, and for the love of heaven, with an energy reminding one of their brigand associates, whose prayer becomes a command, and the command death if not promptly obeyed. Some soldiers were keeping watch outside the building. Priests, nuns, fine ladies, contadine, perfumed beaux, and liveried servants, cardinals and monsignori, were streaming in and out of the doors; some kneeling at the altar, others prostrate before a favourite saint, ornamented for the occasion with new artificial flowers. The fine proportions of the elegant church told well as a background to the moving, animated scene, the graceful marble pillars (pilfered from some ancient temple) springing airily to the roof. On the grand altar were displayed the chains which, tradition says, bound St. Peter in prison; hence the name of the

church "in Vincolo." They lay exposed to the veneration of all true Catholics in a small box lined with crimson silk. Wrapped in deep meditation and prayer, numbers knelt on the steps, and so would I have knelt also, if I could have believed the tale, but alas!—"Mi manca la fede!" I thought the chains looked particularly modern, and very weak and feeble in the links—*fancy* sort of chains, and not at all the kind of articles wherewith to bind a man who had a mind to break them. I gazed with the crowd, but did *not* believe.

Flowers (of cambric) ornamented the altar all about, while the grand old "Moses" frowned down from the corner where he is so barbarously wedged in, with a look of supreme contempt at the scene around. The more I look at that statue, the more I dislike it, profane as it is not to rave about the so-called "capo d'opera" of Michel Angelo "the divine." Nothing can be more ill placed than the statue, on a low seat nearly on a level with the spectator, the gigantic form squeezed between two columns, on a monument which all the while is *not* a monument. Certainly this image does not impress one with a high idea of Moses. The grossly sensual expression tells of passions proper rather to a satyr than a lawgiver,

and the long, ropy hair falling from the head and beard painfully remind one of a shaggy goat—faults which are unrelieved by any nobler indications save an air of arrogant command. The drapery, too, is ill folded, heavy, and bad. Should a great lawgiver who speaks with the Almighty appear in such a guise, with such a look? No, truly. Still, amid all its defects, this is a remarkable work of art—specially remarkable for a peculiar savage air of grandeur all its own, and not to be described. It has also great power, consisting in the *anima* which makes the cold marble *palpitate* with vivid expression. The action, too, of the figure is natural, the forms bold without being overcharged, like many of Michel Angelo's works. The modelling of the arms is particularly fine. But how wanting is the statue in all wherein the Greeks so excelled—the sedate, noble simplicity, the profound, contemplative look, communing as it were with eternity, which almost excuse the worship paid by an ignorant people to these sculptured gods. Above the "Moses" lies a recumbent statue of Julius II., so placed as to appear precisely like a sphinx. For this atrocity Michel Angelo is not responsible.

Over an altar there is a lovely St. Margaret, by Guercino, rebuking a monster ready to devour

her. It positively riveted me. One may here admire his admirable colouring, compounded of the Roman, Venetian, and Bolognese schools, with that bold opposition of light and shade in which he so delighted. Who ever had a finer appreciation of female beauty than Guercino, of that glowing, warm, gorgeous type perfected under a southern sun, flourishing along with the luscious grapes and the pomegranates, and often brown and sunburnt as they? St. Margaret is in white, with a purple drapery; her long hair falls dishevelled over her shoulders; and the almost saucy air, girlish yet commanding, with which she menaces the creature (whose great jaws, well furnished with teeth, are opened to devour her) is uncommonly charming. I shall never forget that picture of "Valiant Margaret," as Wordsworth calls her.

In the sacristy hangs Guido's "Hope," a sweet pathetic head, fit to match with the Cenci. There is a picture, too, by Domenichino of "Paul's Deliverance in Prison"—*maniéré*, hard, and ill coloured: the angel looks most *positive* and earthly in his stiff curls. Certainly this "celestial visitant" brought with him "no airs from Paradise." I have no notion of admiring a picture because it is celebrated, and praised by Murray.

CHAPTER XIII.

Baths of Titus at the Coliseum, at San Martino di Monti, and at the Sette Sale—Cardinal Antonelli.

CLOSE by the Coliseum are the Baths of Titus, on the side of a vineyard-covered hill. On driving up, they present very much the appearance of a gigantic rabbit-warren enclosed by brickwork burrowing into the hillside in oblong holes, shaped something like the *vomitoria* in the Coliseum. I was astonished at the contrast they presented to the grand, awful-looking masses of the Baths of Caracalla, which rise like the ruins of some mediæval castle fabulous in extent, with turrets, walls, and bastions cresting the sky. The glories of the Baths of Titus are, on the contrary, deep buried underground, and one must descend down and down deep stairs, and through long subterranean passages, before their wonders are revealed. Here, where the light of the bright sun never falls, and day and night are alike gloomy and mysterious, halls of interminable extent open-

ing into long suites of chambers, corridors, and temples, penetrate the earth in a state of perfect preservation. The imposing grandeur of this underground palace cannot be described; it impresses the mind with funereal thoughts and speculations on other centuries and nations, when the world was as unlike that place we inhabit as the moon would appear to us were we transported thither.

These ruins have, so to say, a triple antiquity, being supposed first to have formed part of the villa of Mæcenas; then to have been appropriated to the golden house of Nero, whose memory was so execrated that his burnished palace, of surpassing size and magnificence, was degraded by being made the foundation of the public baths erected by Titus, and its chambers filled up the more securely to consolidate the superstructure, which can alone account for the firm and compact manner in which those portions still unexcavated are completely packed with stone and rubbish, although the roofs and walls are still entire. Standing in the central hall, the long vista opening on either hand is a sight not to be forgotten. It wants but the garden and the trees, bearing the bright many-coloured fruit, to carry one away to Aladdin and the Arabian Nights.

On one side were the rooms intended for winter use, then looking full on the sun, which has never penetrated here for so many centuries; the other façade, for summer habitation, faced a garden, now buried deep down in the soil, and only to be surmised from the situation of a great hall, with an arched opening, in whose centre still remain the ruins of a fountain, where the water welled up from an enormous marble basin, now the wonder and glory of the great vaulted hall in the Vatican. Along the margin where it stood still appear stone troughs for enclosing earth, where flowers—their blossoms reflected in the water—gave the finishing touch to what must have been a scene of more than Epicurean luxury.

There are other places where portions of the Baths of Titus are visible, as, for instance, in the church of San Martino di Monti, which is, however, disputed, for some look on these remains as portions of the Baths of Trajan and the Sette Sale, a general reservoir common to the Baths and Coliseum.

Up a particularly filthy and narrow lane, breaking off from that glorious highway leading in a straight line from Santa Maria Maggiore, crowning the Esquiline with its snowy domes and colonnades, to the old Lateran Basilica, proudly

spreading its immense, though elegantly light, façade on the summit of the Coelian Hill, is situated one of the grandest and most interesting martyr-churches of Rome—San Martino di Monti. No mere casual observer would ever discover the church, hemmed in as it is in a narrow alley bordered by great blank walls, standing in a tumble-down *cortile* where a soldier keeps guard, part of the monastery being occupied as a barrack. On entering the spacious and admirably-proportioned edifice, the eye is perfectly overcome with the gorgeous *ensemble* of painting, gilding, marble, mosaics, and fluted columns, all surmounted by a ceiling so magnificent in purple, gold, and crimson, the colours finely mellowed by age, that it requires some moments actually to realise its splendour. The central nave is large and grand, the columns supporting the aisles of ancient, and therefore classical, workmanship; the altar, raised on double flights of coloured marble steps, is resplendent with magnificent decoration; the tribune above glows in gilding and rich frescoes; and side chapels of great beauty open out beneath the arches of the aisles, decorated with statuary and painting.

I can give no details, for my memory seems oppressed and stupefied by the grandeur of this

superb *ecclesiastical drawing-room*, such being the only appropriate term I can apply to it. I do remember one curious painting of St. Elijah, as the Catholics call him, who, in company with the Wandering Jew, is, according to tradition, supposed to be still walking the world until the end of all things. He, as if wearied by his endless pilgrimage, reposes on a rock, while an angel beckons to him, pointing to the sea stretching away before them, as if animating him to proceed on his wanderings.

The aisles are filled with paintings, alternating with the interesting frescoes of Poussin—poor and washy, however, in execution, I confess, to my eyes, and much injured by damp, as are his water-colour paintings in the Colonna Palace, though, as far as the drawing goes, full of fancy, and rich in Italian character.

I descended down marble stairs to the first subterranean church, situated immediately under the altar, which, being visible from the nave, gives great lightness to the tribune, as row after row of coloured marble balustrades meet and intersect each other, ascending and descending very gracefully.

The second church, or crypt, is circular, the arched roof supported by clustered columns of

much beauty. Here lie the bones, not only of Silvester, but of four martyred popes, besides those of many other early confessors to the faith, who sealed their life by a glorious death.

The monk acting as my guide, whom I instantly discovered to be Lucchese from his accent, made his reverence before their remains, and then opened a door at one side, where, through a narrow arched stair, we descended into a dimly-lighted cavernous vault below. Having early been consecrated as a church, and serving as a place of concealment to Silvester in the stormy days of persecution prior to the accession of Constantine, these vaults have been wonderfully preserved—no Roman remains in Rome are more perfect or more striking. Green damp covers the gigantic piers supporting the boldly-arched roof, while here and there great entrances, now built up, lead into other long-drawn aisles—we know not how far beyond—communicating with the interminable network of catacombs surrounding subterraneous Rome.

We walked upon a black and white mosaic pavement, similar to that I have noticed at the Baths of Caracalla. Not a sound, not a sight, but was in harmony with this dark region of the tomb.

“Faint from the entrance came a daylight ray,”

gleaming down the passage by which we had entered into the solemn crypt, heavy with the dews of long ages, and rich in the association of both pagan and Christian Rome. No modern hand has desecrated it—Bernini (thank Heaven!) having left untouched this earliest sanctuary out of the catacombs. A place more awful and solemnising cannot be conceived, and as I wandered among the huge arches and beheld deep vistas of solemn gloom, I felt penetrated with indescribable reverence in the presence of these consecrated remains that even ruthless Time has spared.

Pagan Rome is gone, and Christian Rome is but a name; but those solemn walls stand firm and majestic, even in decay; and those altars, where rest the martyred saints, are entire amid the consecrated gloom which the sun has not penetrated these eighteen centuries.

Close by the church there is a well-walled vineyard, bearing the inscription outside, in small chalked letters, “Sette Sale.” A stranger might pass hundreds of times up that lonely lane hemmed in with walls, and not remark it; yet there are treasures of ruins within that wooden door, which opened to us after long knocking.

A highly-cultivated garden appeared, with a broad path winding through the trellised vines, which I followed. The good-humoured contadine stood up as I passed, and, smiling, wished me "*Una buona passeggiata.*"

In one corner of the pretty vineyard, positively bristling with ruins, is a hillock formed of crumbling walls, overgrown with grass, and myrtle, and dwarf ilex bushes, with here and there a long straggling vine, in whose side seven arched openings, hoary with decay, open into seven enormous vaults—great cavernous recesses, all black and dismal—used, as it is supposed, for reservoirs of water to supply the Coliseum and the Baths of Titus, which lie farther on, near the fall of the hill. The cabbages and lettuces grow up to the very brink of these awful pits, and all nature wears a smiling, domestic character, utterly unsympathetic with, and sternly repulsed by, the frowning ruins, which scorn such impertinent approximation.

Wandering down a little farther, I came to an enormous portico, forming one of the angles of the baths, where the philosophers used to expound their Grecian wisdom in the ears of the degenerate Romans. Perhaps under that very arch, the siege of Jerusalem, the obstinacy and destruction of

the Jews, and the magnanimity of Titus were discussed and commented on as the latest "news from the East." How are the mighty fallen! Rome lives but in a few unintelligible ruins—a fragment and a confusion! Titus, his arch with its triumphs, and his gigantic baths, are mouldering in decay. The Jews are wandering homeless over God's wide earth; and here a few olive trees bask in the warm sunshine under the vaulted roof, once radiant in marble and gold, where congregated the learned few whose togas swept the rich mosaic floors. The pillared colonnades, the shady groves, the magnificent shrines, have vanished; the sumptuous pile is no more; and Nero's golden house, accursed for his sake, and exiled from the surface of the earth, alone preserves its subterranean walls, buried deep down in the bosom of mother-earth—that parent whose cold embrace cherishes so carefully all intrusted to her keeping.

I made the acquaintance to-day of a very remarkable man, on whose shoulders at present rests the entire responsibility of the Papal Government—Cardinal Antonelli, secretary of state to Pius IX., and minister also of finance, of police, of justice, of everything—*multum in parvo*, in fact; for he has appointed such mere lay figures to these

various offices that he alone bears the onus and the weight of the entire machine of state.

Antonelli was instrumental in his Holiness's escape to Gaeta, and very nearly himself got murdered in those stormy days when Rome was given up to Red Republicans. But now he is installed in the Vatican, and appears neither to dread nor to remember the fate of poor Rossi, the best and most upright minister in Italy. Without question, his successor, Antonelli, is a very remarkable person, and gifted with superior talents for government. *Reste à savoir* if one man *can* do everything—a state problem the solving of which has cost the Roman States another revolution.

In the meantime, the good Pope is given up to prayer and religious observances, and Antonelli alone guides the helm of state amid the angry breakers and sunken rocks of the stormy sea that beats furiously against the aged and rotten timbers of the fisherman's *navicella*, weakened, crazy, and disjointed by the tempests of accumulated centuries.

On the occasion of our visit to the cardinal, on whom fortune smiles, we entered the labyrinth of courts forming that part of the Vatican in which the Pope resides by a private entrance,

after making the circuit of St. Peter's, whose colossal proportions can only be rightly estimated by such a *giro*, or by mounting the cupola. Our carriage dashed through entrance after entrance into a succession of courts, all guarded by mounted sentinels, until reaching the spacious and beautiful *cortile* decorated by Raphael, where we dismounted. An interminable staircase of perhaps one hundred steps next appeared. Up and up we climbed, encountering Swiss guards at due intervals. At last, having gained the fourth story—quite the *piano-nobile* at Rome—came the ante-room, with its allowance of cringing menials, who as we were honoured guests, bowed us at once into a handsome apartment furnished like a dining-room.

As the cardinal was engaged at the moment, we were here entertained by an old French monsignore, canon of St. Peter's, a rabid *Légitimiste*, as he informed us.

My Italian companion, the Countess San G——, is a perfect worshipper of the Emperor Louis Napoleon, and of the Bonapartes collectively and generally. This she was too cunning and acute to declare openly, but drove the poor old monsignore skilfully into a corner, forcing

him to acknowledge how much the Emperor Napoleon had done for France.

"Mais oui, mais oui; la Providence a agi, il faut l'avouer," replied he. "Enfin, la Providence se sert de tous les moyens," in a whining tone.

"Was not Marshal MacMahon a great general?"

"Mais oui; un homme de talent, cependant mondain."

"Ah!" said my friend, "France is prosperous; cela suffit; ses beaux jours sont revenus;" at which undeniable fact the canon looked glum, although the pink of old-fashioned French *politesse*. *

Feeling himself worsted, he passed to a tremendous eulogy of the cardinal.

"Mais il fait tout, ce cher cardinal; il a des talents universels; il pense à la finance, à la diplomatie, au gouvernement intérieur; enfin, c'est un homme miraculeux, et si bon, si aimable!"

As this "universal" character is the very thing for which Cardinal Antonelli is reproached by his enemies, who stigmatise his ministry precisely because he insists on doing everything, I could scarcely suppress a smile at the ill-timed enthusiasm of the canon.

"Ce cher homme," continued he, "vous savez qu'il a manqué d'être tué lorsque le saint Père

* This was written before the war.

s'est enfui: comment aurait-il jamais échappé? Ah! il faut adorer la Providence!" saying which, he folded his hands, and assumed an unctuous look of devotion.

I was growing weary of this old man, with his "providential" tirades, when the major-domo entered, and announced that the cardinal would receive us.

We passed through a suite of rooms to the writing apartment of his Eminence, where were tables overlaid with letters and papers, all arranged with the nicest order. Here stood the cardinal, a tall, handsome man, of a grave and majestic presence, which at once, without any effort on his part, inspires respect. He was dressed in a purple robe, or *sottana*, edged and trimmed with red, a red skull-cap on his head, stockings to match of red silk, with the nattiest shoes on the neatest feet, set off by gold buckles.

I cannot positively assert that Antonelli is handsome, but he has a fine Roman face, almost Zingaro in character, with brilliant black eyes, and that rich sun-burnt complexion common to Italians. The expression of his countenance is excellent; and the suavity and kindness of his manner in receiving a party of ladies (who must have been a great nuisance to him) admirable.

My companion the countess was intimately acquainted with him and his family; nevertheless, her reverence for a cardinal prince operated on her so strongly, that she cast herself on her knees before him and kissed the hem of his robe—a proceeding he vigorously opposed, but without succeeding. My genuflexions were also profound, but of a more moderate character, as became a *protester*, within the precincts of the Vatican.

The cardinal led us into a charming boudoir, or drawing-room beyond, exquisitely furnished: sofas and chairs of the richest Berlin work; carpets into which one's feet sank, as it were, to rise no more; walls covered with valuable paintings in glowing frames; and crystal cabinets enshrining priceless collections of those articles named of "bigotry and virtue." The windows looked out over the great Piazza of St. Peter's, and formed part of the façade that faces high up over the colonnades to the right. Sure never were fairer apartments wherein a favoured cardinal kept his state; not even Wolsey at Hampton Court was better or more nobly lodged.

We two ladies were seated on the sofa, while the cardinal placed himself opposite, and it was then I fell to admiring the extreme beauty of his foot and the almost feminine whiteness and deli-

cacy of his hands, where on one finger sparkled a superb emerald. A conversation now began with the contessa, who rattled away in a lively, sparkling way on a variety of subjects. She spoke of her desire to make converts to the Catholic faith. Antonelli received her remarks with a silent smile.

"I," said he, after a pause, "being a Catholic and a cardinal, naturally would desire to see all the world even as myself—*come son io stesso*—but such a change should arise from deep conviction and mature reflection in order to be acceptable to God. I little admire the violent efforts of those who think that by promiscuously making converts they perform a good and acceptable work. For worldly motives to operate in such a question is obviously most improper, and I much fear many sudden conversions of inconsiderate persons arise from that cause."

These were noble sentiments, and came with double force from Rome and the Vatican in the nineteenth century. After this little rebuff to the good-natured but over-zealous countess, who so eagerly desires to see the whole world within the embrace of the "one true Church," the conversation turned on England. Of that country the cardinal professes himself a great admirer. And

the extraordinary memory which he possesses! All he reads he remembers, even to the most minute descriptions of public buildings, streets, &c. He told us that he had astonished the Duchess of S—— by describing to her exactly the exterior of her London mansion.

“Why, you never told me you had been in London,” exclaimed she.

“I have never been there,” replied the cardinal; “but I read some years ago a description of the great London houses, and I remember some of the distinctive features of your Grace’s mansion. And,” continued he, “I have surprised Germans and French too with my accurate descriptions of certain marked features in their capitals.”

He inquired particularly about myself, taking really a lively interest in much I told him.

“Come to me,” said he, “if I can serve you. It would give me pleasure to be useful to you.”

Twenty requests were on my lips in a moment, especially an introduction to a certain ambassador; but I reflected that the offers of princes were sufficiently complimentary and gracious in themselves, and, like relics, should be hung up to be venerated and admired, but not to be used. However, I must observe, *par parenthèse*, respecting Cardinal Antonelli, that I knew an English

lady really in distress to whom his kindness and protection, when invoked, were quite Samaritan.

We chatted on in the most agreeable way for more than half an hour, and, although prepared to move, the cardinal did not allow conversation to flag for an instant. He made the contessa quite happy by promising her the consecrated candle which he was to bear at the approaching feast of the Purification, one of the grandest in the Roman calendar; and charmed me by the paternal kindness with which he addressed her as daughter, calling her *mia figlia*, with the most graceful tact possible, assuming thus his own position while he indicated hers.

At last we rose to depart, when the contessa, spite of all opposition, would perform the same genuflexions, although he exclaimed—“*Ma—le prego—Davvero mi duole—Come mai,*” &c. He shook hands with me, and actually conducted us to the outer door of his private rooms—an attention duly observed by the *servitù* in waiting, who received us with all manner of homage in consequence. So we retreated, quite *comblées d'honneurs*, and descended to our carriage in the best possible humour with ourselves and all the great universal world.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Roman Jumble, or Sketch of a Day.

ONE of these fine, bright, sunshiny days is so mixed and varied by all sorts of sights, that it is like a mimic life. The four-and-twenty hours extend and dilate into a well-filled existence, and I find myself taking in so many and varied ideas, and passing through such shifting scenes, that, unless I came home and put it all down, I could never believe one day would afford so kaleidoscopic a variety. It is only at Rome one can spend such days, where the present and the past meet, clash, or harmonise, as the case may be; where one may rush from the catacombs to the marionnettes, or from an appointment with the Holy Father to the hurdle-race ridden by real English jockeys. New phases of life open out with the passing hour, each by turns engrossing, enticing, intoxicating to various minds. Every chord of intellectual sympathy is touched, and the spirit grows well-nigh paralysed under the over-

whelming sense of its utter inability to grasp even a portion of the mighty whole that unfolds in all its excellence before it. The sculptor—the painter—the antiquary—the lover of antique art—the philosopher—the interpreter of Christian antiquity—the profound theologian—the admirer of Nature in her wildest and most unadorned beauty—the epicurean, who delights in sumptuous palaces, marble halls, and pillared terraces, stretching into orange groves luxuriant in tropical profusion—the sportsman who revels in his exhilarating flight across the free Campagna—the fine lady, who lives only for routs and balls and incessant dissipation—the nonchalant *élégant*, her husband, who reads the *Times*, and lives at “the club” all day—the solitary pilgrim, journeying from distant lands to fall prostrate before Christ’s vicegerent upon earth—the soldier who loves reviews and the “pomp and circumstance” of war—the lawyer, who buries himself in musty libraries—the architect, come from the far North to study classic porticoes, colonnades, and piazzas of Palladian palaces built for the bright summer, glorious as its sun, where other Romeos may love, and still fairer Juliets be wooed, under the shadow of deep cypresses, in azure nights when reigns a softer day—the musical dilettante, who finds here the best opera in har-

monious Italy—last of all, the idle rich vagabond, without end or aim in his senseless life, simply seeking for amusement,—Rome, in her boundless multiplication of varied resources, will satisfy and fascinate.

In the morning I strolled into the Borghese Gallery, always invitingly open—that superb palace which flings back as it were disdainfully the meaner houses pressing upon its long façades, stretching away down entire streets. Little Pauline Bonaparte must have felt rather proud when, on entering the grand central *cortile*, with its open galleries and graceful colonnades, she was hailed as its mistress.

The apartments devoted to the picture-gallery are on the ground-floor, and of almost interminable extent, ending in a corridor decorated with a sparkling fountain, and commanding a lovely view of St. Peter's, rising out of the green meadow encircling the Vatican on that side, and extending to the water-side. Close under the windows rolls the turbid Tiber, widened here into the Porta di Ripetta, with divers squat, miniature steamers riding on its muddy current, which take passengers and cattle (the latter decidedly predominating) up the river as far as possible into the dreary Campagna.

I had already visited the Borghese Gallery many times, but it is a place not to see, but to live in, among those grandest pictures time has spared. I of course saluted the divine Sibyl—the presiding deity of the whole collection, singularly bright and glowing for the usually sombre pencil of Domenichino. I cannot but look, however, on that picture as intended for a St. Cecilia rather than for the pagan prophetess. Then there is her magnificent rival, Circe, by that wonderful colourist the Ferrarese Dosso Dossi, who has here called forth the most gorgeous *ensemble* of beauty the eye ever rested on. There is a strange repose in the aspect of the enchanted wood within whose shadow she rests, dressed in a rich Eastern costume, drawing around her circles of magic incantations, which she calmly watches, as though certain of success.

Of what a different class are the Sacred Families by Andrea del Sarto!—monotonous in expression and grouping, always the same face of his somewhat Dutch-featured wife, with nearly the same head-dress, but soft and harmonious in colouring, as though his brush had been dipped in morning dew: *ruggiadoso*, as the Italians have it—a word dropping as it were with glittering dewdrops.

But most of all do I revel in three or four pictures in the Venetian rooms; specially those grandly beautiful Graces, by Titian, bearing the bow and quiver of Cupid, whose eyes Venus (a type of perfect loveliness) is binding.

Where did Titian procure such models? or *did* he ever procure such models? Rather are they not visions of his glowing imagination called forth from the vasty depths of his own Venetian skies, as he floated in his gondola under the fragrant shade of the green islets that encircled his native Venice?

Then comes "Sacred and Profane Love," contemplating each other on opposite sides of a well, with Cupid between them playing with the water: the one calm, reserved, reflective, clothed in white robes of the Venetian style, wearing flowers in her auburn hair; the other vain and careless, with a certain *abandon* in her attitude, revealing her terrestrial propensities—the ever-lighted lamp of pleasure burns in her upraised hand, as she turns towards her staid companion, her graceful limbs concealed by no jealous drapery, but set off by the red mantle lying near, and the thick, tangling tresses of golden hair falling over her snowy shoulders. What shades, what magic colouring enchant the eye in these glorious works of Titian,

he who created at pleasure the entire circle of Olympus—free, open, and serene!

Hard by hangs Giorgione's "David," clad in a complete suit of silver-steel, standing out from the canvas with the power of a basso-relievo, the personification of a chivalrous knight, though, sooth to say, as little indicative of the young Israelite as possible. This picture is a fine specimen of the painter's austere, emphatic manner.

I have generally an objection to *chefs-d'œuvre*, and will frankly confess that I care neither for Raphael's "Entombment"—to my mind a feeble, inexpressive group, always admitting the extreme beauty of some of the heads—or for Correggio's "Danaë," a picture where connoisseurs profess to admire the finish of his *chiaro-oscuro* and the transparent brilliancy of the lights. To me she appears a mincing, ill-limbed, quite unattractive nymph—ungracefully sprawling on a couch, and not at all worthy the fuss Jupiter made about her.

Nor do I care to dwell on Garofalo's great picture, stiff and mannered, though admirably coloured; but my eye rests with delight on that noblest of Raphael's portraits, called "Cæsar Borgia," where the painter has evoked so vivid and imposing a likeness of that depraved but

romantic man, who horrifies yet delights one by the alternate depths of wickedness and bravery, of cruelty and intellect, that chequer his life. There, encased in that frame, he stands; and every one who has ever heard his once dreaded name can read his character in those bold, commanding eyes, which seem to follow one round the room like an evil spirit.

I delight in the murmuring fountain splashing melodiously over the porphyry pedestal in the centre of the great hall, the only sound that breaks the silence of those endless rooms. And I delight, too, in the chamber of mirrors, where painted garlands and festoons obscure the brilliant glass which they are intended to decorate. Cupids lurk among the flowers, and roll in very joyousness under their perfumed shade: while gilding and stucco, and statues and marbles, enrich the walls and the ceiling. Even for stately, palatial Rome this is a glorious old palace, and my memory will often fondly return to it, summoning back the pleasant hours I have dreamed away in its silent halls.

From the Borghese Palace I ordered the carriage to drive by the Corso towards the Aventine. The Corso to me bears the impress of a perpetual *festa*, arising, I suppose, from reminiscences of the

Carnival and those two hours of the "Moccoli," when its lofty sides become transformed into cavernous precipices of incessantly-moving lights, glittering and sparkling with an eccentric will-o'-the-wisp brilliancy, that puts the pale stars to shame. At the top of the Corso the dark turrets of the Austrian ambassador's palace frown down on the ever-gathering crowd below—all that remains of the feudal ages in Rome. Built, like the Farnese and so many other palaces, from the spoils of the Coliseum, it was once inhabited by Charles VIII., when, full of young and untaught presumption, that carpet-knight descended into Italy, as he imagined, to behold and to conquer, until the Keys of St. Peter and the Lion of Venice gave him such sore blows he was glad to return to "la belle France." This imposing structure, more a fortress than a palace, is the only spot in Rome which really preserves the characteristics of the middle ages. Connected with the Piazza and Palazzo di Venezia is the glowing little church of San Marco, the glittering new-fledged daughter of a glorious time-honoured mother, on the placid waves of the blue Adriatic. Near at hand a whole faubourg of palaces raise their proud heads in mutual rivalry—the Doria, the Altieri, and the Torlonia, where that citizen keeps his state by

the side of Rome's most ancient nobles. Presiding over the district appears the sumptuous church of the Gesù, dark and sombre in its magnificence as the pages of its annals. Here, in a gorgeous chapel, lapped in a funereal urn of bronze and gold, under a winding-sheet of marble, with precious stones and Oriental alabaster heaped around, the whole surmounted by an enormous globe of lapis-lazuli, lies Ignatius Loyola—his mausoleum as resplendent as his life was poor. Statues people the lofty aisles; pictures animate the glittering altars; the rarest marbles sustain the roof; and the most precious metals form the capitals. His history is written on the walls in marble and in bronze, and an image of solid silver adorns the altar. Enthusiastic, devoted, brave, the Spanish monk was the latest, and perhaps the strongest, support of the Church. Its foundations, sapped by Luther, were sustained by Loyola. Strange contrast! the Guelphic shrine of Loyola hard by the Ghibelline palace of the Austrian Cæsar! Theocracy and feudality face to face, measuring each other like two athletes in an arena! Another palace is near, forming a part of this suggestive corner, but, like the history of its race, it lies detached—that of Madame Mère, where once resided the mother of the plebeian

Charlemagne, a ruler who, if fate had spared him, would have really established throughout Italy *lo buon stato* of which poor Rienzi dreamed.

But I have been tempted to linger on my road, and at this rate shall never complete, as I desire, the day that I have chalked out. Let us on to the Aventine, once divided from the Palatine and the Capitoline Hills, in the days when history was young, by a marsh so profound that the plebs of Rome could only reach their favourite hill in boats. On we go, skirting the open ground where stands the temple of Vesta, the prettiest ruin perhaps in the world, its base washed by the Tiber, and the church, known as the Bocca della Verità once a temple dedicated to Ceres—mounting an ascent, up the steep side of the Aventine, where none but Roman horses could have kept their footing, to say nothing of dragging a heavy carriage after them. I was extremely alarmed at finding our centre of gravity so utterly unsupported; but as the Italian coachman only laughed at my fears, and declared it would be a *vergogna* towards himself if I did not allow him to proceed, I was fain to sit still and resign myself to my fate. Arrived at the summit, horrid, envious walls rose up, bordering lonely lanes which opened out in various directions. Not

a soul appeared—not a sound was heard, save the busy hum of men below, blended with the rushing waters of the Tiber. Above, all was solitude and desolation. The very ruins are no more; destruction and time have not spared a stone. The Aventine possesses only suggestive recollections. Instead of being crowned by the sacred Grove dedicated to the Furies, it is belted by a noble zone of churches. The walls, however, were impenetrable; and I could only dismount and dream of Hercules and his victory over the ancient monster, and remember the unpropitious augury of Remus, and rebuild in my own mind the magnificent shrines and temples that once uprose on this hill in honour of Diana, erected by the united Latin tribes in emulation of her great fane at Ephesus—the stately edifices in honour of Juno, and of the Bona Dea, who sat enthroned, crowned with her mural coronet. It was on the Aventine that the last Gracchus retired to die—that Marius was born—and, more interesting still, that the second separation of the senate from the people occurred after the death of Virginia in the Forum. Those words of fire in which he dedicated the soul of Appius to the infernal gods had no sooner been spoken by Virginius than the plebeians, goaded to madness,

retired to the Aventine; but not before the body of the slaughtered Virginia had been borne in solemn procession through the city, followed by the Roman matrons and damsels strewing flowers, jewels, and locks of their own hair as offerings to her offended manes.

Virginus, on returning to Rome from Mount Algidus with the revolted legions, encamped on the Aventine. Here, too, were situated those once beautiful Horti Serviliani, in whose groves Nero took refuge when he fled from his golden house during the sedition that cost him his life. The Tiber lay invitingly at his feet, as it winds round the abrupt slopes of the Aventine, and he determined to end his life by a plunge in its waters; but, pusillanimous and undecided, he, who was unworthy to live, wanted courage to die!

Along the centre of the hill extends a broad road, where stand three churches—Santa Sabina, San Alessio, and the Priorato—without doubt erected on the site of pagan temples. I tried in vain to obtain admission to San Alessio; but I penetrated into its neighbour (only divided from it by a garden), and entered a *cortile*, within which stands the dignified but modern-looking church of Santa Sabina, on the supposed site of

the temple of Juno Regina. It might have served as a portico to a city of the dead, so desolate was its aspect. Grass grew in the *cortile*, and moss had gathered round the columns. Unbroken silence prevailed: the very birds were silent, and I felt actually afraid of waking the melancholy echoes by pulling a bell at one of the great doors.

After waiting some time—for in Italy patience becomes one of those cardinal virtues one is forced daily to practise—a boy appeared and opened the church, a fine large building of basilican form, but exceedingly damp and chilly, with scarcely a vestige of antiquity remaining. In a side chapel is one of the most beautiful pictures in Rome, the “Virgin of the Rosario,” painted by Sassoferrato, which, being hung in a good light, is seen to perfection. It reminded me of those pretty verses (a remnant of the republic) addressing the Virgin as—

“Maria della bionda testa
I capelli son fila d’oro,
Rimirando quel bel tesoro,
Tutti gli angeli fan festa.”

The Virgin, a beautiful creature, not too much idealised, draped in red, presents the infant Saviour to San Dominico and Santa Catarina of



Siena, who, habited as a nun, kneels at her feet. There is a sweet youthfulness in the figure of the saint which is extremely touching; a sort of devotional *abandon* in her prostrate attitude full of expression. Beautiful angels, graceful as Albano's Cupids, hover above, bearing a red flag or drapery over the Virgin, the warm tones of which harmonise charmingly with her robe and the white lily at her feet.

I left the church and strolled along the summit of the Aventine, silent and musing as all nature around. The sun shone hotly, though in January; and all around prevailed that death-like repose peculiar to mid-day in Italy. I wandered into the open *cancello* of a villa, and followed a dark walk of overarching box and ilex, on to a stone terrace overlooking the city, which lay at my feet, divided by the river into two unequal portions. There was the Ponte Rotto, now broken no longer, a handsome iron suspension-bridge connecting the old Roman arches yawning on either side of the river. Beyond, in the centre of the current, was the island of the Tiber, with its ship-like prow, still retaining the artificial appearance of a vessel which the ancient Romans gave to the spot where stood the once magnificent temple of Esculapius. On the opposite or Tras-

tevere side, gardens filled with richly-laden orange and lemon trees enlivened the long sombre lines of the houses, flinging back the sun's rays, and lighting up the bright globes of fruit that clustered on the dark boughs; the Janiculum hill backing the prospect broken by villas and casinos, with here and there a solitary pine tree.

The church of the Priorato is situated in this romantic garden, belonging now to Cardinal Marini, and incorporated into his villa. Within the church, its walls all white as the driven snow, lie monumental effigies of Knights of Malta in full armour, carved in marble, stretched in stern repose, each on his funereal pile.

The woman custode threw open a wide door, and a glorious view burst into sight. Rome was invisible, but the windings of the Tiber through the leafy groves called Campi del Popolo Romano, and the desolate Monte Testaccio, surmounted by a single cross, occupied the foreground. Beyond lay the low, marshy Campagna towards Ostia, broken by the magnificent basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, surrounded by vineyards and gardens, the trees just bursting into snowy blossoms. All save this bright spot was indescribably melancholy. In the surrounding plain, malaria, ruin, decay, and pestilence unite to form a wilderness



noxious in summer both to man and beast. The wind sighed gently as it rose from the plain, fanning the deep woods of the garden, like the voice of Nature mourning over the desolation of this once rich and pleasant land.

I turned into a little lawn in the surrounding garden, where grew an immense palm tree, at whose foot ran a little streamlet, issuing from a broken fountain, presided over by some mutilated god of ancient Rome, now shorn of his fair proportions, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." By this time the whole population of the custode's family having gathered round the *forestiera*, all repeating the usual cry of "*Dammi qualche cosa*," I beat a rapid retreat.

The roads along the Aventine, now mounting up, then dashing down, covered with rough masses of unbroken rubbish, would be the despair of any but Roman coachmen, who possess the art of teaching their horses to climb like cats. Down at last we jolted into a deep hollow at the back of the Forum, to a dirty, miserable open space, where the wretched malefactors of modern Rome are executed. A more dreary place to die in can scarcely be conceived.

It was but a moment, and the intervening walls shut out the dreary arena where crime sighs

out its last wretched groan; and I found myself descending into a kind of hole before an ancient church in my search for the Cloaca Maxima, whither I was bound. Beside the church, and much below the level of the surrounding buildings, stands a well-preserved marble arch, low, but of massive proportions, having four distinct arched entrances, marking the meeting of four ancient highways. Rows of niches, separated from each other by small columns, still remain, indicating where statues once stood; and it has a solid, substantial look, defying even now time and decay. The arch is that of Janus Quadrifrons, and the church is that of St. George, whose name, joined to our national cry of "Merrie England," still defies the world.

Close beside the church (a grotesque old pile, sinking into mother-earth out of sheer weakness and old age) stands another arch, almost incorporated into the building, richly decorated with arabesques and bas-reliefs, erected to Septimus Severus by the bankers and tradesmen of the city. On one side appears the emperor, with his consort Julia; on the other, their sons Geta and Caracalla, though the figure of the former has been effaced by order of the brother who so barbarously caused his death.

Here was a rich corner that detained me some time, though no Cloaca could I discover, and the solitude was unbroken by the appearance of even a beggar. I was just going away in despair, when I was attracted towards a pretty garden in which some labourers were working. On my asking where was the Cloaca, one of the men led me along a little pathway to a screen of orange trees skirting a bank, from whence the ground fell rapidly towards a deep watery ditch, penetrating the adjoining houses through an arch, precisely as a stream passes under a mill.

"Ecco," said he, "la Cloaca."

The place swarmed with washerwomen, who scrub perpetually at small reservoirs in the thickness of the wall, under the massive vaults once the pride of Rome.

I was infinitely disappointed, and could only marvel at the high trumpetings which lead half Europe to gaze on an impure ditch! It is all very well for books and antiquarians to tell us that those blocks of stone are of Etruscan architecture, and were hewn and constructed in the time of Tarquinius Priscus, fifth king of Rome; but these details do not alter the fact that the much-extolled Cloaca, through which Strabo says a waggon loaded with hay might once pass, must now be

classed as one of the many disagreeable objects from which one turns disgusted away.

While I stood there, a Cistercian monk entered the garden dressed in white, with the red and blue cross peculiar to the order conspicuous on his breast. He had spied me out, and came to ask for "elemosina," that universal chorus of the modern Roman tongue. He was a venerable-looking old man, and I fell into conversation with him.

"You are English?" said he.

I owned the soft impeachment.

"You are a Catholic?"

"No," replied I.

"Are there," said he, "many convents in England?"

"Very few," said I, "and we wish that there were still fewer. Monks may be very well here—in questo paese—but we are too active and busy in the North to admire them."

"Alas!" said he with a sigh, "*la Madonna vi aiuta!* Our great convent," continued he, "is in France; there are none of our order in England, dove per lo più so bene che ci sono pochi Christiani"—such being the opinion Catholics express when they speak frankly of *us*, who esteem ourselves the lamps of the world, the sun and

centre of civilisation! We are not even Christians!
O miserere!

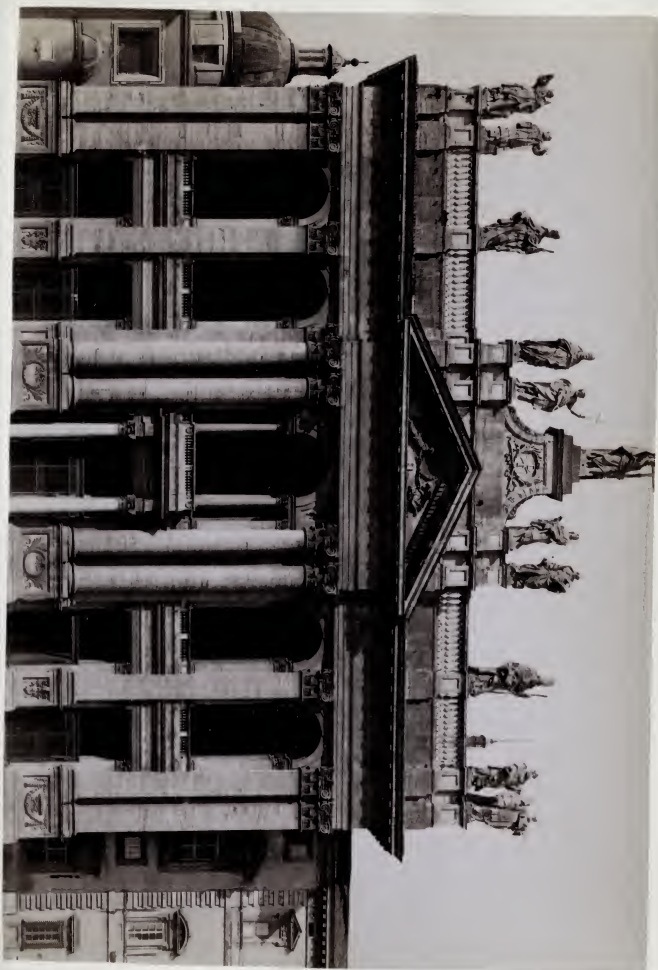
In this obscure neighbourhood are the now nearly invisible remains of the Circus Maximus, under the shadow of the Palatine, which rises abruptly aloft, crowned with the stupendous ruins of the palace of the Cæsars. The Circus, situated in a vale between that hill and the Aventine, must ever be interesting as the well-known site of the rape of the Sabine women.

Successive rulers, from the time of Tarquinius Priscus to the Emperor Claudius, enlarged and embellished this the grandest monument of Rome before the erection of the Flavian Coliseum. Gold, marbles, statues, and altars were not wanting for the adornment of this rallying-point of two hundred and sixty thousand spectators, where horse, chariot, and foot-races, wrestling, boxing, and combats with wild beasts, varied their amusement. On the spina passing down the centre of the arena were erected the two obelisks now adorning the Piazza del Popolo and the square of the Lateran, at whose base were placed the bands of music that enlivened the audience during the games. Of the vast multitude who age after age applauded the skill of the charioteers and the courage of the gladiators, history only records the grati-

tude of the lion to the generous Androcles, who, being exposed to fight with wild beasts, was recognised by a lion from whose paw he had some time before extracted a thorn, who fawned upon him in the midst of that great circus, and licked his hand. Even the iron Romans were interested by so touching a sight, and the gratitude of the noble animal saved his benefactor's life.

Alas for the utilitarian nineteenth century! the site of this once superb arena is now converted into a gasometer, as red and as flaunting and ill-odoured as any gasometer in any little country town; and here is a pert little white house in the centre of the yard, and a cast-iron railing in front fresh from Birmingham, desecrating the soil where kings, dictators, and Cæsars held their imperial state, their gorgeous togas sweeping the mosaic floors as they passed out of their gilded palaces on the Palatine down through the marble colonnades of the stately Forum, to witness the cruel pageant displayed on "a Roman holiday."

Leaving this part of the city, I drove by the Coliseum towards the magnificent basilica of San Giovanni Laterano, the parent church of Rome, whose porticoes and domes crown the Cœlian Hill, and are approached through a long park-like avenue extending from the grand façade of the



plateaux of grass, jumbled together in a manner quite irrational for this country.

My day had already been varied enough, but there were still further contrasts in waiting, as it was not more than three o'clock, and our list not yet completed. How intoxicating it was thus to surrender oneself to the varying impressions, scenes, sights, and wonders around, making one day in Rome richer, fuller, and more satisfying than years of ordinary life! I re-entered the grand old walls that yet girdle Rome—those walls so broken by ruined towers, and castellations, and mouldering arches, with here and there higher towers flanking Etruscan-looking gates breaking the shadows that began to fall, with glimpses of bright sunshine.

We passed through a maze of dirty cavernous streets, damp and mouldy, and unwarmed by the life-giving sun, to where the Forum of Trajan sinks below the modern level of the city, in an oblong piazza strewn with broken columns and capitals, and surrounded by a square of shabby, commonplace houses.

Let us pause for a moment before proceeding onwards under the portico of one of those Siamese-twin churches flanking its extremity, and recall a few of the recollections that spontaneously arise.



All the world knows that the sculptured marble column—in which I can see no beauty—rising before us, once served as a pedestal to the statue of Trajan, whose life was passed in continually running over the world in search of fresh enemies and renewed battles. He who must be execrated as one of the persecutors of the Christians is now dethroned from his lofty stand; and replaced by a statue of St. Peter, erected in rather questionable taste by Sixtus V. The Forum beneath was designed by Domitian, and executed by Trajan, under the superintendence of that same architect, Apollodorus, who afterwards lost his life for daring to utter an unfavourable criticism on the temple of Venus and Rome, designed by the Emperor Adrian. Beside it once stood the Ulpian Basilica. Here Constantine the Great, seated in the tribune of that superb edifice, surrounded by dignitaries, senators, and princes, a goodly company, where the West greeted the East—many of them, however, being pagans, who listened with horror and rage—in the presence of the assembled multitude, whose loud and frequent applause, echoing down the triple aisles and into every columned recess, shewed that Christianity had at last found many believers—here, I say, Constantine proclaimed “Christianity the religion of the world, and ex-

horted all to abjure the errors of a superstition the offspring of ignorance, folly, and vice."

These words, that still sound, after the lapse of fifteen centuries, grand, solemn, and impressive, were received by a populace mad with joy, who for two hours echoed a chorus of "malediction on those who denied the Christians," repeating "that the God of the Christians was the only God, that his enemies were the enemies of Augustus, and that the temples should now be shut, never more to be reopened; and calling on the emperor to banish from Rome that very day and hour every priest of the false gods." But Constantine (whom God seemed to have inspired with the very spirit of wisdom) replied, "That there was this distinction between the service of God and that of idols—that the one was voluntary, and the other forced, God being honoured by the sincere affection and belief of the intelligent creature he had created in his image. Therefore," continued he, "let those who refuse to become Christians fear nothing; for, however much we desire that they should follow our pious example, it is alone by persuasions, and not by force, we would induce them." Having thus spoken, the emperor descended from his throne, and, passing out of the great portico by the equestrian statue of Trajan, proceeded to his





palace at the Lateran in the midst of the applause of his subjects, after which all the city was brilliantly illuminated. A spot so consecrated in the history of Christianity, in itself the most architecturally beautiful monument in Rome, was spared even by the ruthless barbarians, but towards the ninth and tenth centuries the city was given up to internal disorders and excesses of all kinds, and to that period may be referred the ruin of this, as well as many of its other most ancient sites.

From the Forum of Trajan I hastened to the church of San Giuseppe-of-the-Carpenters near by, beneath which lie the Mamertine prisons. The exterior (fronting the Roman Forum, only divided from that of Trajan by a small block of houses) is prettily painted in bright frescoes: a double staircase conducts to the portico, somewhat raised from the ground.

I passed into the interior of the small church—its walls almost covered with *ex voto* offerings—and after some difficulty succeeded in unearthing the custode, whose presence was indispensable, as I intended descending to the Mamertine prisons below. The custode, good man, was well used to his trade, and soon produced the torch which was to lighten our darkness in our descent under the

arch of Septimus Severus into the very bowels of classical Rome. An iron wicket guards the entrance into the vaults, from which we descended to the first dungeon, of rather large proportions when compared with the dismal *piombi* of Venice. But the rigour and sternness of the Republican Romans are visible even in the architecture, the walls being formed of great blocks of solid tufa joined without cement, like the cyclopean walls of the Etruscan cities that crown the Latin hills.

On one side of the ceiling were the remains of what once was a trap-door, now walled up, through which the bodies of prisoners condemned to the lingering tortures of starvation were drawn up after death. This upper prison is now converted into a chapel, and has an altar bearing hideous effigies of St. Peter and St. Paul. Nothing could have been visible but for the torch carried by our custode, a garrulous old man, who had no scruple in making the solemn walls echo to his gossiping, interlarded with many a "*Sì, signora*"—" *Mi favorisce di qui*"—" *Vuole vedere di là,*" &c. Down some steep and narrow stairs we descended to the lower prison—small, confined—the great masses of unhewn stone just over our heads. This is the Tullian dungeon, authentically traced as existing as far back as the reign

of Ancus Martius, having been completed by Servius Tullius, whence its name. In this suffocating hole, where the infernal gods reign supreme, and a heavy and unwholesome air only penetrates through a small round hole opening into the upper prison, died by starvation that gallant son of the Desert, the brave Jugurtha, who nobly defended his country against the Roman arms. Here his ardent spirit burst its earthly bonds in solitude and darkness, while, regardless of his unmerited fate, the Roman senators and proud patricians, swelling in the pride of power, gathered their ample togas around them as they swept through the stately colonnades of the neighbouring Forum. Here, too, by order of Cicero, or rather of his wife, the haughty Terentia, the wretched Romans concerned in Catiline's conspiracy were strangled.

In these prisons died also the vile Sejanus, that cruel and degraded panderer to the base passions of the brutal Tiberius.

Historical tradition confidently names this as the locality where St. Peter was imprisoned, and as such it will be venerated by every denomination of Christians until the day when the earth shall exist no more. I cannot give expression to the contending feelings that agitated me as I

glanced round on the very walls where his eyes had rested, and placed my hand on the very pillar to which he was chained, when I pictured his sufferings, his heavenly consolations, and horrible death. Such emotions are overwhelming, and can only be realised in full force on the very localities where, as with Thomas the Apostle, one's finger touches the sacred marks, and the doubting soul is, as it were, forced into belief. Here is the spring said to have gushed miraculously forth out of the solid stones (and solid indeed they are, and of Etruscan massiveness) in order to enable the Apostles Peter and Paul to baptize, during their imprisonment, the keepers of the prison, Processus and Martinian, who were so powerfully affected by the teaching and example of the Apostles, that, on the return of Nero from his Grecian expedition, they suffered martyrdom in the persecution that then commenced. The water wells up bright and pure, never rising or falling, and is now enclosed in a kind of setting of masonry, and covered by a bronze lid. After the emotions and recollections excited by these prisons I could see no more; the day, too, was already falling, and the light, when we reascended, had become pale and dim. I had, during the last few hours, felt, admired, and examined

so much, my mind was oppressed by the weight of recollections. On returning home I caught up a pen in *furore*, determined to convey on paper, however faintly, some idea of the variety offered by one day's sight-seeing at Rome.

END OF VOL. I.

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D I A R Y
OF AN
IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

BY
FRANCES ELLIOT,
AUTHOR OF "PICTURES OF OLD ROME."

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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

The Artists' Festa.

ONE day, and another day, had been talked of for the artists' festa, annually celebrated at Rome, unless wars, or rumours of wars, or bloody red republicanism scare the old walls of the Cæsars from their propriety.

A certain Monday was fixed, and we set forth, a merry circle, chiefly of American friends, determined, like the charity children sent down by the railway for an excursion in the country, "to make a day of it." Eight o'clock saw us emerging from the Porta Salara, with its *entourage* of beautiful villas, each enshrouded in woods of laurel, box, and ilex, traversed by long vista-walks of clipped yew and cypress heavy in unbroken shade, with terraces bordered by statues, and balustrades leading down long flights of majestic

steps to the sparkling fountains below—abodes such as no land but Italy can boast. Just now the gardens are full of roses, flowering everywhere in luxuriant masses, specially the white and yellow Banksian roses, which fling themselves over the high walls, and festoon the very trees with wondrous-clustered blossoms. Honeysuckles, tulips, and bright ranunculuses caught our passing sight in the gay parterres. Especially, too, did I admire the groves of Judas-trees, real mountains of purple blossoms, without a single green leaf to break the gorgeous colour. They are generally planted near the marble basins of the fountains, in advance of the deeper woods which serve as an admirable background. How much have those to learn who never beheld the glorious burst of spring in this luxuriant land! that idyllic season realising all the glowing descriptions of the poets. The process of renewed and opening life, occupying long months in the cold North, mysterious Nature here accomplishes in a few days. The land, radiant with new life, puts on its vernal mantle of freshest green, its jewels of brightest flowers; even the sullen rocks and frowning ruins are embroidered with garlands of snowy May, and flowering grasses stream in the soft breeze. The turf becomes a perfect garden—cyclamens, ane-

mones, crocuses, violets, poppies, and hyacinths growing in such profusion, that the sweet blossoms are wantonly trodden under foot. The woods too, those primæval fortresses of ancient trees, are painted with every tint and shade of green, and vocal with innumerable nightingales, whose soft songs invite one to wander under the chequered shade, beside cool bubbling brooks and splashing fountains, all overarched by the heavens, serenely, beautifully blue.

At length we bade adieu to the zone of villas clasping like an enchanted circlet the grim city walls, and entered the Campagna—a sea of emerald green. In the direction of the Porta Salara it is beautifully varied by accidents of wood and dale, high waving headlands, and broad moory valleys, through which old Tiber flows majestically down from the fat lands of Tuscany. After descending a rocky ravine, we drove along a spacious level plateau, through which the river sweeps in many windings, bordered by hills—a region of wild craggy dells and far-stretching fells and hills, some black, rocky, and dreary, others clothed with low woods and stunted shrubs, crowned here and there with a ruined tower, or an old tomb standing out sharply against the sky. We were reminded of the object of our drive by

meeting now and then a masker gaily caparisoned, on horseback; a poursuivant, all crimson and quarterings; or Stenterello, the Southern brother of "Punch," dressed in white; or a Chinaman in flowered drapery of chintz—most incongruous apparitions in that prairie wilderness. Behind, between the parting hills, uprose the great dome of St. Peter's, sole evidence of the neighbouring city. After an hour's space we crossed the Ponte Salara, a fine old Roman bridge, built by Belisarius, and drew up at the Torre, close by an ancient tomb, surmounted by a mediæval tower, in whose foundations an "Osteria" shelters itself—ruin upon ruin, all desolate and decayed. Here a dense crowd of maskers were awaiting the arrival of the president of the sports, grouped at the base of the old tomb. Such a medley: *diamine! par impossibile!* Austrian generals mounted on donkeys, wearing great stars and orders of painted pasteboard, fighting imaginary duels with wooden swords bearing the motto, "*Non amazzo;*" hunters with guns, yards long, quite suitable to Glumdalclitch in a sporting mood; Mercury, fat and rosy, in a tin helmet, fringed chlamys, boots, and pantaloons; a negro; Hercules with his club, in Turkish trousers and worsted slippers; Don Quixote, with a real brass barber's basin on his

head, riding a mule; and Ganymede, painted all over with bacchanalian devices, such as decorate wayside public-houses in this land of the vine; his shoulder-knots the bottoms of rush wine-flasks, and ivy and grapes painted all over his clothes—a walking “*Spaccio di Vino*.” He had no sinecure, by the way, Ganymede, pouring out the wine to the thirsty throng, all that livelong day. There were soldiers and gendarmes magnificent on donkeys which kicked, and now and then rolled in the road; and Venetians, in red velvet and pointed hats (recalling the dark gondolas, shooting through the bridges, and love, and intrigue, and mystery, and cloudless skies, and snowy churches, and tinkling guitars in dear Venice); and a male Pomona, embroidered all over with amber satin apples and green leaves; and the great sea-serpent on horseback, much encumbered by the wind continually catching his tail; also a priest of Jupiter with a patched eye; Chaucer in a red mantle, with gold bells, and a close blue hood with a tail, and pointed shoes, wearing spectacles too; and a Bedouin Arab, who drove out in a small gig made of basket-work, and invested himself with appropriate drapery of black and white in a quite off-handed manner, holding the horses’ reins in his mouth, after which

he offered us coffee out of a large pot; Medea driving about in an easy *calèche* with two old women—getting in every one's way, and causing those gallant souls, the donkeys, to kick; and Paul Pry, with an eye-glass as big as his head, together with an unfortunate gentleman in black, of the melancholy time of our own first Charles; others in ruff and doublet, and hat and feathers, of the Spanish or Raleigh school. Many characters, however, were quite indescribable, fluttering all over with oceans of variegated ribbon, others nearly buried in flowers, and some crowned with ivy and with bay—the only wreath, possibly, they may ever win, so let them enjoy it *pro tempore*, poor souls! Harlequins and Shylocks—quite correct from the traditions of the Ghetto; a school-boy with his satchel and tight-fitting “whites;” a Greek with red cap and mantle looking die-away and romantic; a mediæval page, pretty enough to please “a fair lady's eye;” the Postillon de Longjumeau in pink and white, a dapper little fellow bestriding a huge horse, and a *vetturino* in long boots and a laced coat.

But I have done: how can I describe one-half, or give the faintest idea of that motley *charivari*, merry, noisy, many-coloured? The troops of donkeys, some laden with splendid mediæval

heroes in a red stocking, perhaps two; horses bearing gentlemen in mufti—steady married men, “who would not condescend, could not think,” &c., of such tomfoolery; the waving banners, the trumpets, the braying of the innumerable donkeys (which evidently felt themselves specially ill-used and victimised on this occasion, and with reason), the laughter, the cursing of the cabmen (to speak nationally) who had come out from Rome, and were indignant at any interference with their wretched cattle (one little man in particular got so violent, and gave utterance to such a volley of Italian oaths, I thought he would have had a fit; indeed, he was only stopped by the Austrian general belabouring him with his wooden sword), the Babel of languages, English, American, German, French, Italian, each louder than the other, but the Teutonic guttural decidedly predominating, as did the artists of that nation. In the midst of this universal hubbub, all eyes were suddenly directed to the bridge, where appeared a Red Indian crowned with waving ostrich’s feathers, clad in skins, embroidered and edged with rich fringes, wearing a necklace of coral and big shells, his face painted and streaked with black, and crimson, and brown, mounted on a big horse covered with leopard-skins. His quiver and ar-

rows were slung at his back, and with a rifle in his hand he galloped forward in a wild, reckless way, looking altogether quite terrific. Never did I behold such a happy masquerade. He was received with shouts of applause as he dashed over the bridge, and he had not been on the ground five minutes before three different artists implored him to sit to them for his portrait. Next went forth the cry that the president was coming, and the Germans cried "Platz!" and the Italians "Largo!" and the English "Make way," and a passage was cleared through the crowd for a huge triumphal car slowly passing over the bridge, wreathed and enveloped with laurel, and olive, and bay, containing a knight of portly and noble bearing, clad in cloth of gold, and wearing a helmet. This was the president, a very Bacchus-god, whose broad, smiling countenance told of merry nights spent with boon companions over the rich wine, more than of days of study. His helmet was garlanded with vine and ivy leaves, and he looked the very condensation of the frolic, good-humour, cosmopolite jest and merriment of the festa. Yes, he was well chosen, that president: and there was a large and genial soul under that massive, manly form, that looked out from his pleasant blue eyes, dancing with glee as he

bowed and waved his helmet, while the thrilling shouts arose of "Hoch lebe der Präsident!" "Evviva!" "Hurrah!" joined to the firing of mimic cannons, the inarticulate shouts and cries of many dialects, the braying of the donkeys, and the imprecations with which Medea and the two old ladies driving in the easy *calèche* were loaded for eternally getting in everybody's way.

Then the president, sitting royally on his car, distributed medals to all the artists present, quite appropriate to the occasion, being half *bajocchi* (the very smallest copper coin) strung with blue ribbon; these were fastened in the button-hole, and worn along with the tin drinking-cups everybody—the married dignitaries, as also the melancholy Charles I. characters—slung over his shoulders. The ambassadors were then presented; the Chinaman and his attendant, bearing an umbrella over him of brown holland, covered with dragons and monsters in coloured paper; and the Turkish minister, and the Grand Llama, and the Red Indian. Speeches were made—the deep, manly voice of the president often audible—and then songs were sung, and after that all the cavalry, the gendarmes and distinguished military authorities on donkeys, and lastly, the foot, were marshalled on the grass of the surrounding Cam-

pagna. One unfortunate little donkey, bearing a heavy cavalier, out of sheer desperation, positively lay down and rolled at the gate, overcome by the prospect of its manifold misfortunes. But it wouldn't do; he was dragged up and forced to join in the muster, and then the procession was formed—the president in his pagan car, drawn by great white oxen with scarlet housings, leading the way, followed by the banners and the horse and donkeymen, Medea in the easy *calèche*, now fairly under way, the Bedouin in his basket-gig, and lastly, a cart loaded with barrels of wine, wreathed with laurel and bay, which poor Gany-mede will have to distribute, running about on those fat legs all day. Then the carriages fall in, and we all go driving farther out into the green wilderness so desolate and fair, along the river's bank, whose murmuring waters are rarely drowned by such strange sounds of holiday. The solitary road along which we pass is overshadowed by the past; the merry present finds there no sympathy: hills rise around, and beyond, on the opposite bank of the river, wooded heights stretch far away into infinite space, sweeping over the plain towards the far distant, just visible Monte Soracte; and near by are rocks of a sunburnt, ruddy tint, protruding through the grass in the fissures of the

hills, giving a wild, characteristic look to an otherwise monotonous scene. We reach an opening opposite the river, flowing away with full majestic stream to the left; a broad valley, broken by a stream, cleaving asunder the low, rounded heights, and winding away through red-looking rocks, with nothing but a few ragged shrubs and tufted grass and brambles clinging to their sides. It is a sad and lonely place, like some old battle-ground heavy with the curses of the slain. There are deep grottoes, too, in the rocks, and on one side a precipitous mound of black stones and broken earth, difficult of access. On the summit of this mound the artists' banner is planted, and flutters gaily in the wind; for it is a fresh and breezy day, divided between delicious wafts of sea breezes and a southern sun. Under the rocky mount a tent is erected for the dinner, beneath whose shade the ponderous wine-barrels are piled, followed by Ganymede ever in close attendance; and the president now, descending from the triumphal car, assembles his motley court on the hillside. The whole valley is peopled with incongruous groups of maskers scattered here and there; hundreds of spectators bivouac among the fissures, and crevices, and chasms of the rocks, and recline on *improvviso* divans on the fresh

grass, forming a vast human amphitheatre, to witness the games below on the level ground. Loud laughter and sounds of mirth soon arouse the echoes of the hills, especially when Ganymede emerges from the tent, and rushes frantically about, bearing the wine-cup.

The games are announced. First came a donkey-race—those unhappy victims of the artists' rejoicing—with piteous brayings, being forced to carry large men, who urged them across a stream, which they positively refused. Few would go at all, being utterly regardless of the feelings of the mailed knights, and ambassadors, and nobles of high degree they bore, and the whole race ended in a grand *mêlée* and confusion. A thing very like a gibbet was then erected for riding at the ring, the riders being arranged on one side all bearing lances, with which, dashing forward, they were to carry off the ring from the hook. Chaucer, with his cap and bells, got a fall, Pomona rolled on the grass in company, and the Chinese ambassador, whose long plaits of tow he evidently considered a masterpiece, tumbled on the top of both; the Red Indian carrying off the ring amid shouts of laughter echoing from hill to hill. This game was repeated many times with various success; then the wine-bowl passed round, and the

deep bass voice of the president was heard encouraging the sports; while the indignant donkeys brayed louder and louder, waking the whole Campagna with fresh fun and frolic. At last, when the sun had become intolerably hot, and the Bedouin had long settled himself down in the shade to drink coffee out of his large pot, the dinner was announced, and the president and his court, and the masquerade company generally, adjourned to the tent, where for the space of two hours they were lost to mortal ken under the shadows of the great wine-casks. Knots formed, too, among the spectators for eating and drinking, but there was no shade, not even a bush, to temper the sun's rays on the burning Campagna that mocked one with its fresh mantle of emerald green. I ate an excellent dinner, with the happiest, merriest party of Americans and Italians. We were perched on the summit of a rise, full in the sun, which neither umbrellas nor parasols could render invincible, but we were so hungry we didn't mind it.

Last of all, when the day was waning, came the distribution of the prizes. The president, glittering in golden armour, took his stand in the centre, while one by one the victors approached him—humbly kneeling as he presented to each

crockery vases of various shapes and sizes, which were received as treasures with delight and reverence, as also a draught of wine out of his own peculiar flagon, which Ganymede had to replenish very often that sultry day, I promise you. As each successive victor retired, bearing on high his earthen vessel, he was received with loud and vociferous acclamations: deified Cæsar, passing up the Forum and greeted by the assembled Quirites, was not more enthusiastically cheered. There was a mock solemnity about the whole scene that reminded one of enacted *tableaux vivants* out of Cervantes; it was the heroic age of knight-errantry admirably travestied and run mad. The grave and majestic demeanour of the president, his eyes alone twinkling with suppressed merriment, as he presented a crockery *scaldino* to Shylock, victor in the donkey-race, and addressed him in a speech of dignified eulogy on his gallant achievement; the gibberish conversation between himself and the Red Indian, the majestic and solemn salutations exchanged with the ambassadors who advanced to take their leave, all was perfectly in keeping—the sublime of the burlesque. The beautiful “Am Rhein” was then sung in parts, as none but Germans and enthusiasts *can* sing it, the rocks and hills of the Campagna

echoing each long-drawn note of the rich Northern melody. It still lingers in my ear; I think I hear again the rise and fall of those many manly voices, and see their upturned faces beaming with life, and light, and energy, now deepening into one overwhelming sentiment of national remembrance. When it was all over the excitable Italians cried "Bravi" like perfect demoniacs, and rent the very air with their wild applause. The president, his broad honest face flushed with emotion, then advanced into the centre of the throng, and with outstretched arms, like a very pagan patriarch, closed the rejoicings of the day by drinking one long, grand, universal *lebehoch* (health) to all languages, nations, people. "The entire world," exclaimed he, "I greet in this last loving cup!" There was something catholic in this grand convivial salute to the universe, and it reminded me (not, as Hamlet says, "to speak it profanely") of that thrilling scene by which the Roman Church winds up its Easter rejoicings, when the venerable pontiff, from the central balcony of St. Peter's, with outstretched arms includes all the nations of the earth in one solemn benediction.

After such a soul-stirring finale to a happy day, I returned home rejoicing to the eloquent

city that now, as ever, speaks with tongues of living fire to all hearts and sympathies, nourishing in her mighty bosom art, genius, learning, and religion.



CHAPTER II.

A Roman Steeple-chase—The Martyr-Church of Santa Martina and Accademia of San Luca—Footsteps of St. Peter and St. Paul—An English Hunt at Rome—Martyrdom of Sixtus II. and St. Lawrence—Church of St. Lawrence—A Singular Tradition—Circus of Romulus—Tomb of Cecilia Metella.

THERE is a lonely spot in the Campagna—lonely even for that desolate wilderness—situated in a bend of the river near the Ponte Nomentana, that most picturesque of all Roman bridges, with its castellated walls and towers engrafted on the solid masses of which it is formed. Weeping willows, and feathering pollards just bursting into the brightest tints of spring, sweep across the rapid stream flowing between high banks of grass carpeted with gayest flowers. Just beyond is a low, square-shaped mound, whose green sides are unbroken even by a furze-bush: that is the Mons Sacro, so celebrated in the republican annals as the spot where the commons, or *plebs*, retired on account of the great numbers confined for debt, until they were pacified and brought back to the

city by the consuls. To the left a lonely expanse, encircled by low hills, forms a natural amphitheatre, the deep and rapid river dividing it from the road; while farther on rises abruptly an eminence once crowned by the well-known city of Antemnæ, one of young Rome's bitterest rivals. The sides of the encircling hills are broken by patches of bright wheat, little dells shaded by low copse-wood, and here and there a solitary watch-tower.

I have visited that natural arena, singular for its wild symmetry, when all nature has been hushed; the only moving creatures being flights of birds whirling round in giddy circles ere they launch into the blue expanse—the only sound the bleating of the goats, as they follow the shepherd home to be milked—the only foreground objects great flocks of sheep, with here and there a wild, shaggy horse browsing or galloping at will. But to-day “how altered was its sprightlier scene!” for this same lonely spot is no other than the race-course; and to-day is the “steeple-chase,” and all Rome has turned out to see the fun. Clouds of dust rising high in air indicate the road from the great city, sending forth its immense visitor and native population. Antiquity, and solitude, and contemplation are effectually put to the

rout. The bridges heavy with memories of Rome—the old towers—the sacred mount—the hills—all echo to the rattling, talking, laughing multitude.

A grand stand, ornamented with bright red drapery, that told well among the universal shade of emerald green, was erected under the hills, and there the mass of the company gathered. I took my stand on a rising ground commanding the whole space, and found myself unexpectedly in good company. The French ambassadress was there in a picturesque riding-dress, reposing *à la* Phillis on the grass, quite rural and touching to behold, surrounded by a whole *état-major* of attachés and officers, fancying themselves rustic for the nonce. Well, there we stood, gentle and simple, rich and poor, noble and plebeian, forming a diadem on that grassy mound, and all gazing on the animated scene below.

At certain distances along the course, which extends about two miles, hurdles were erected; and there was a low, artificial wall, and a deep ditch which the people persisted in calling a *river*. Even an Italian might have ventured those leaps; but, considering discretion the better part of valour, they abstained from taking any part in such dangerous sport. Over the plain were scat-

tered innumerable groups; and there were hundreds of carriages, and those *toujours perdrix* officers—an indispensable ingredient of every Roman scene—the *carabinieri* keeping the course, and rushing violently about in pursuit of the unhappy and much-abused plebs. And there were fair equestrians, unmistakably Saxon, who condescended to curvet and canter in a show-off style quite refreshing to the *profanum vulgus*. Two knots of young priests clothed in scarlet (Greeks, I believe), not being allowed to descend among the mundane, stood on distant mounds, and grouped wonderfully well among the great universal ocean of green. Then there were contadine in picturesque dresses, and the poetical-looking beggars who sit for models and congregate on the steps of the Trinità di Monti; and vendors of drinks—*acque buone*—screaming; and coachmen swearing fine-sounding classic oaths—"By the body of Bacchus!"—and, altogether, such a pretty, animated, moving scene, that I quite despair of describing it.

The distant mountain-tops, still white with snow, melted lovingly into the fleecy clouds, leaving one in doubt which was land and which was vapour—lending a visionary and mystic frame to the prospect, and leading the mind away to un-

real worlds high up in the distant heavens, or to the voiceless solitudes of primeval forests among the Alban Hills. How merrily the sun did shine, making all nature glow and palpitate with renewed life at the jocund burst of spring!

This season is the real summer of the Campagna, when the grass is green, the flowers blossoming, and the low trees in the damp dells covered with leaves of a pale, delicate green. When the great heats come, all is dried up as a very potsherd, partaking of that burning tint that strikes down from heavens of brass in arid, consuming heat—destructive to every living thing, animate or inanimate.

By-and-by, after much waiting and grumbling, out dashed the horses, with their pink, and red, and yellow riders, scudding across the plain as quick as the eye could follow. Up and over they go in a trice; the hurdles are cleared, and then the ditch and the wall, clean and neat—quite beautifully taken! No, there is one brute that *will* lag behind; and see! he won't leap that sham little wall. At length—see! they have all arrived safe and sound; for to be sure they were the very mildest of leaps, and the steeple-chase was surely the most innocent affair in all sporting annals. Fame says a young Frenchman won;

and no great glory to him either. But the good horses were English hunters—*cela se comprend*—so, like dear brethren as we are, the glory of victory was divided!

In a moment the pent-up crowd swells over the plain in a moving mass, and we come down and drive up and down on the smooth turf to see the equipages and the people.

There is Torlonia in a high English curricule, with two footmen in royal liveries behind him; and there are Americans, with blue eyes and Turkish beards; and English gentlemen in top-boots, forgetting their *morgue*, and becoming quite excited; and carriages full of smart wives and daughters; and drags with six horses covered with bells, and fur, and feathers; and Italian gentlemen, very magnificent in gold chains and studs, with wonderful trousers, mounted on miserable hacks: and away we go towards home, into the mystery of dust, flying mountains high before us.

I looked back, and already the lonely spot I knew so well, cleared of the ephemeral crowd, had returned to its loneliness. The sun was now sinking in purple and gold behind the mountains; long, soft shadows were spreading over the plain; down from the low hills crept the great flocks of sheep, pressing on and on to their old pastures,

which the busy world had so lately usurped; the birds circled, and shot on "whirring wing" as before; and the cool evening breeze came laden with the scent of flowers and herbs, the frankincense Nature sends up to God's altar in the sky.

Tired of the dust, the noise, and turmoil of the Carnival, where men and women play at rude romps for a whole week, and do not even put an "antic disposition on" becomingly, I wandered up to the Capitol, and then down the steps on the other side, by the arch of Septimius Severus, to the church of Santa Martina, in a corner of the Forum. The day was cold and chill, but a warm sun fell on the steps leading to the portico of the church, where lounged all the beggars and idlers of the neighbourhood at full length—a motley assemblage of bronzed, half-naked savages, sullen-eyed and heavy-featured—clad in sheep-skin, the fur turned outwards.

The church of Santa Martina, although one of the oldest martyr-churches of Rome, has been entirely and ruthlessly modernised by Pietro di Cortona, who was so satisfied with his work of destruction that he called it "his daughter." When I say modernised, I mean made to look as lumberly and awkward as St. George's, Hanover Square. In form it is circular, with three prin-

cipal altars. In a niche stands the original of Canova's "Religion" — a majestic figure richly draped, pointed flames forming a glory round the head. Near by is the picture of an obscure martyr who suffered under an imaginary Roman emperor; some one who had his hands and feet burned off, and was killed, but somehow came to life again, and painted a picture in the Lateran church, dying after all comfortably in his bed.

A flight of stairs mounting from the church conducts to the Accademia of San Luca, to which it was attached as a sanctuary. In modern times the name of Carlo Maratti is intimately connected with its increasing celebrity, he having been its president for many years. The gallery was icy cold, and I found the custode endeavouring to warm himself over a miserable *scaldino*. This old fellow was a great character.

"*Evviva*," said he, starting up as I appeared. "I am delighted to receive madama. Why was she not at the Corso, to see the *furore* of the Carnivale? That was strange, for ladies like fun — *ma, si vede bene* — the signora is a *dilettante*. Ah, *brava*! Now let us view the pictures, *che sono belli, bellissimi*."

He did not know half the masters, and those

he named were wrong; but there was no putting him down.

"This," said he, "is a 'St. Jerome,' by Titian. Ugh! *che colorito, un originale*. This is Fiamingo——"

"Was it Rubens or Vandyke?" This question he pretended not to hear.

"*Si, si—Fiamingo, ecco. Un originale proprio.*"

"What is that head?" said I.

"The Queen of England," replied he.

"Not the present one?"

"No, centuries back;" Elisabetta, he thought, was her name. "*Non è bella*, but she was a fine woman, and diverted herself in her day. *Si è divertita immensamente, ma, poi!* Now the worms would not feed on her. Pah!"

There was an exquisite "Venus," by Titian, very little troubled by drapery, surveying herself in a glass held by Cupid—a charmingly-coloured work, the goddess radiant in the rich type of Venetian beauty.

"*E bella*," said the old fellow, scratching his head, "*ma un po scoperta, ma! come si fa?* Nature made us all, and Eve wore no petticoats."

A young man, dressed in the romantic-German-artist style, was standing by an easel, bearing

a copy of a most splendid "Claude," one of the gems of the gallery.

"*Ecco*," said he, "*questo signore*, he is come all the way from Genoa to copy our pictures, and it is so cold he can't work to-day."

"*Sì, davvero troppo freddo*," replied the long-legged youth.

"He is the Marchese X——," whispered the old man; "*molto gran' signore, ugh! Nobilissimo*, but he loves the art, *che gli fa onore*."

"I cannot paint," chimed in the *sans-culotte* marchese, "it is too cold; *diantre! quel froid à cette saison!*"

There is much trash and many fine pictures in this collection, of which Murray says absolutely nothing. There is a splendid Titian, Diana bathing, surrounded by her nymphs, discovering Calisto, a group by no means *convenable* for the goddess of chastity; indeed, quite fit to figure on the walls of Fontainebleau in the time of Francis I. This picture was presented by a Russian, and when the Czar was in Rome the custode said he came to see it, and was very angry so fine a painting had been sent out of the kingdom. No wonder. It is superbly coloured, and leads one's thoughts away to the bright blue, dancing Adriatic, mirroring the snowy churches like great snow-

drifts, within whose pillared sanctuaries such treasure-pictures are stored away. The old man grunted immensely over this picture.

"Ah!" said he at last, "it is dangerous to bathe sometimes—specially in company."

He seemed to have a malicious pleasure in informing me that the most *décolleté* pictures had been the donation of different popes; and as there are many of this description, I really am afraid the associates of San Luca have, notwithstanding their saintly patron, a terrible turn for the world, the flesh, and the devil.

One of the most beautiful *genre* pictures in Rome is here, by Guido Cagnacci, a pupil of Guido Reni's, — Lucretia with Sextus Tarquin holding a dagger over her. Suffice it to say that it is one of those remarkable works that stand out distinct when hundreds of others fade into the mist of memory. Copies of it are multiplied to an incredible extent; but it could not be hung up in a church, call it by any name you would. The picture tells the story, and tells it all too well.

"Ah!" said the custode, "Lucrezia was a fine woman for Tarquin's son to have lost Rome for her sake."

Sextus's face tell of love, despair, determina-

tion, rage, rapture—all mingled together in a wonderful way. Those magic shades must have come from Guido's own pencil. The so-called picture of San Luca, said to be by Raphael, is weak, mannered, and utterly deficient in grace. San Luca, seated at an easel, is painting a portrait of the Madonna, who stands pushed *en profil* in a corner, and of so plain and ordinary a *physique* that it is impossible Raphael could ever have imagined such a creature; there is not one characteristic of his style. The painting is on wood, and has been broken in two places. Of this work Kugler says, authoritatively, that the head of San Luca alone is executed by Raphael. When I told the old custode this he became very indignant.

"What can books tell about it?" exclaimed he. "All the world knows it is by Raphael. It used to hang below, in the church, over the altar; *bestie di libri*. Don't believe them, signora, I beseech you. They only teach people lies. They know nothing about it!"

There is a large "Venus and Cupid," by Guercino, which the custode introduced to my notice in these words:—

"*Ecco, Venere—con tutte le sue consolazioni!*"

I love Guercino and his inimitable *chiaro-oscuro* and depth of shadow, contrasted and tempered

by a peculiar sweetness produced by the happiest combination of colour, though he *did* live in the time of the *Décadence*, and belonged to the Eclectic School.

Here also is Guido's "Fortune rising from the Globe," one of the finest frescoes in Rome—a glorious form—reminding one of the Rospigliosi "Aurora," with full rounded limbs, and matted yellow hair flying in the wind, by which Cupid holds fast as though determined to win and keep her. The *concetto* is most poetical, and the colouring perfect.

I have dwelt longer on this most varied and interesting collection from the fact of its being comparatively little known or appreciated. When I departed, the old custode doffed his weather-beaten hat, and bowing down to the ground, said—

"*Addio, cara signora; I honour and respect you—Stia buona bene e felice*—and remember the poor old fellow that keeps the *gloriosi quadri*."

I wish to note down the traditionary footsteps of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome, having visited the various spots connected with their supposed residence here with great interest. I have spoken of my descent into the Mamertine prisons, where for nine months they are said to have lain in

close imprisonment. While St. Peter was still unmolested and residing at the house of Prudens—now the spot where stands the interesting and most ancient church of Santa Prudenziانا, near Santa Maria Maggiore—he again exhibited an example of that weakness of character which led him basely to deny the Divine Lord he loved. A persecution against the Christians was again threatened; he became alarmed for his personal safety, and his friends strongly urged his flight. Peter listened to them, and allowing himself to be influenced by their persuasions, he fled from Rome, passing out of the Porta San Sebastiano, under the massive arch of Drusus, spanning the Appian Way—now called the Street of Tombs.

He proceeded about a mile, to a spot where the road separates, forming a fork, leading in one direction towards the Fountain of Egeria, and by the other to the church of San Sebastiano, built over the most practicable entrance into the catacombs, beside the tomb of Cecilia Metella. St. Peter, says ecclesiastical tradition, had reached this precise fork where the road separates, when he beheld advancing towards him his Divine Master. Astonished at the sight, he exclaimed, "Lord, where goest thou?" (*"Domine quo vadis?"*) To which question the glorified form



replied, "I go to Rome, to be again crucified;" and disappeared.

The vision explained to the Apostle what were the intentions of his Divine Master respecting himself, and the meaning of that prophecy—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou art old thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." He instantly retraced his steps, and returned to Rome, where shortly the deepest dungeons of the Mamertine prisons opened to receive him.

The actual church of *Domine quo Vadis* has nothing but its beautifully suggestive legend to recommend it, otherwise it is a miserable little place; indeed, there is a vulgar, tawdry look about the interior quite painful to the feelings of those who arrive eager to behold the scene of one, if not the most touching, of the Church's early legends. A stone, bearing the impress of what is said to have been the Divine foot, but which measures some thirty inches at least in length, and is singularly "out of drawing" in every way, stands just at the entrance to the nave.

When the Apostles quitted the Mamertine prisons, tradition leads them to the Ostian Way,

where they were separated previous to undergoing martyrdom. A stone marks the spot, engraven with their parting words: "Peace be with thee, thou founder of the Church"—(St. Paul is supposed to say to St. Peter)—"thou shepherd of the universal flock of Jesus Christ." To which St. Peter replied, "God be with thee, thou mighty preacher, who guidest the just in the living way." St. Paul was then led on to a deserted plain three miles from the city, to which I shall return, first following the footsteps of St. Peter through the busy streets, and over the Tiber, to the steep heights of the Janiculum, where, in sight of great pagan Rome, he suffered crucifixion—begging of his executioners to be reversed on the cruel tree, as a last and crowning act of humiliation, declaring himself unworthy to die in the same upright attitude as his Divine Master.

Where he expired, and on the spot where the cross was erected, now stands the church of San Pietro in Montorio. It was selected by Rome's republican defenders as a barrack—showing how little Papal teaching for the last eighteen centuries had profited the lower population of its own capital. The balls rained like an iron hail-storm on the venerable edifice, enriched and adorned by the munificence of various sovereigns. All the

sight-seeing world go there to examine the painting by Sebastian del Piombo of Christ's flagellation—a work, I confess, to my judgment, dark, unintelligible, and unpleasing; a bad imitation of Michel Angelo, who needed all his individual genius and grandeur to make his contortions bearable. No imitation of his style can ever succeed.

In the cloister, whither we were led by a kind, smiling monk, is a beautiful circular church—a bijou of the Renaissance (very like in form that temple introduced by Raphael in the background of his cartoon of St. Paul preaching at Athens), erected by Bramante over the exact spot marked by tradition as that where St. Peter was crucified.

“*E proprio un miracolo,*” said the monk, “that this church escaped, when the walls around it were battered to the ground? *Si vede che qui sta il santo.* He protected it.”

It is divided into an upper and lower church. In the latter is shown the aperture where the cross was fixed on which St. Peter suffered with his head downwards; thus nobly vindicating, at the last moment, his love and devotion to the Saviour he had once denied. A lamp burns before the aperture. The monk put down a long reed and brought up some of the golden sand from below,

presenting it to us as *una cosa di devozione*. The soil of the hill is in this part entirely of sand of a particularly bright tint—hence the name of the church, “Montorio”—or of the *golden mount*.

I must now take up the traditinary footsteps of St. Paul from the same point as those of St. Peter, namely, before his entrance into the Mamertine prisons. On first arriving in the Eternal City, St. Paul remained for two years, unmolested. During that period he resided in a house situated where now stands the church of Santa Maria, in Via Lata, next door to the sumptuous palace of the Dorias. During this time he was only guarded by one soldier, and from this retirement he addressed his Epistle to the Hebrews, and preached continually to all within his reach, Jews as well as Gentiles. St. Luke is said to have borne him company, and under his dictation to have written the Acts of the Apostles.

The present church is devoid of all save traditinary interest. But there is a subterranean chapel, containing three rooms (then on a level with the city), which he is said to have inhabited, with arched roofs, formed of great massive stones rudely placed together, like the blocks forming the Mamertine prisons. Here, too, is also shown a well, said to have sprung up miraculously, in

order that he might baptize those converted by his inspired preaching.

After the imprisonment of St. Paul and his separation from St. Peter, he was led on about three miles from Rome—on the Ostian Way—to a desolate place in the Campagna, where he was beheaded. Tradition asserts that his head, separated from the body, bounded three times from the violence of the blow, and that at each spot where it touched the ground a spring gushed forth. To commemorate this miracle a church was built at a very early period, and called San Paolo alle trè Fontane. I am always anxious to survey every place sanctified by tradition, however uncertain. It gives a local colouring and vitality to recollections beyond the perusal of a thousand books—making the events recorded, be they historical or religious, in a manner one's own. I therefore set forth, through the gate leading to the great basilica of San Paolo, on my pilgrimage.

After passing the huge church, we turned off from the great Ostian road a little to the left, up a steep ascent. Around, the low grassy undulations of the Campagna, now of a refreshing green, sloped down gradually towards a central valley or amphitheatre, where uprose three large

churches, without a single tree or cottage within sight over the vast range our eye embraced. A strange and solemn sight are these solitary sanctuaries in the midst of that lonely plain. To our left lay a winding valley, stretching away for miles through gently undulating hills, whose soft and delicate outlines assimilated well with the delicate tint of the fresh herbage mantling their sides. No sound broke the silence. Mountains in the distance of a rich purple tint, the blue sky above, and the green earth beneath, mingled in a broad harmonious colouring. I descended towards the churches which people this wilderness with such a crowd of affecting recollections. They lie under the shadow of a low hill, nestling round a ruined building, once a convent occupied by the monks of St. Bernard, but now a ruin, malaria having driven away its inhabitants. As we approached the first church, that of Santa Maria della Scala Santa, a ragged, barefooted monk approached, and offered to conduct us. He was the last of the brethren who had dared to linger there. Within the Gothic church, consisting of a long central nave, bordered by low, rounded arches, he pointed out frescoes of prophets and saints, said to have been originally painted by Raphael; but they are now so entirely

retouched and over-painted as only to display grand and striking outlines.

There is a second large and handsome church, with a dome, forming a conspicuous object from the surrounding Campagna, dedicated to St. Anastasia; but I hastened on, by a narrow path, led by the wretched monk, towards the Church of the Three Fountains. I was vexed to find an edifice painfully modernised, and yet again falling into a ruin devoid of all dignity. It is long and narrow, undivided by aisles. The pillar is shown to which the Apostle was bound, and down the side of the outer wall appear three apertures enclosed in marble, surmounted by a sculptured image of his decapitated head, where the purest and coldest waters flow. I did not visit the spot in the spirit of criticism or of levity, therefore I am in no mood to consider what objections may be urged against this touching tradition, which lends so profound an interest to the wild scene around.

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Hurrah for the breezy, fresh Campagna, sweetly scented with wild thyme, where the Mediterranean gales rendezvous for sport, and play with the blasts sweeping down from Monte Cavo and the snow-capped Sabine Hills! Hurrah for

the bright sun lighting up the low copses fringing the deep valleys, where grow the freshest grass and moss, and the fairest flowers of the spring! And, last of all, hurrah for the hunt and the pink coats, and the splendid horses, and the dogs with their stiff tails!—for there really is an English hunt at Rome, and I have seen it, and have been driving about in its wake for four mortal hours.

Now I will tell you all about it. English are English all the world over; especially so at Rome, where they assemble in such multitudes, they are apt to forget the existence of the Pope and the Romans altogether, and fancy that the city of the Cæsars has become a British colony. Wherever they go—our delightful countrymen—they take their manners like their clothes, carefully packed up, and preserved quite unaltered or improved; and they drink their burning wines in tropical heat, and import “papers,” which they read all day seated in stifling rooms in glorious weather, and cultivate their *morgue* and pride, and their long purses, their unquenchable curiosity, their iron prejudices on all subjects, and their utter inability to speak any tongue but their own; and, last of all, they take their horses, and their dogs, and their grooms, and the whole paraphernalia of

their hunt. Although I am a born Englishwoman, I never knew to what a singularly remarkable and obstinate nation I belonged until I came into Italy. A wonderfully national nation are we, and therefore it is quite astonishing why people so satisfied and delighted with their own habits and customs should ever leave that all-perfect country they will insist on forcing everywhere.

But I have done, and I will go off and away up the long hill, winding round the sides of Monte Mario, crested by the Villa Mellini, and its groves of cypress, ilex, and pine—a very diadem of beauty—with the olive gardens nestling in the warm folds of the hillsides; and on and on by a long road, very dusty and very dull, until we reach a great green plain covered with grass, quite boundless to the eye—green below and blue above—nought save those two colours of primeval nature, the open Campagna.

Here, close by the road, which now becomes a grassy track, is a striped booth erected, fixed on one side to a large van, just like a show-caravan at a country fair; and round the little booth, which looks very solitary and odd, stuck up alone in that awful plain, are grouped beautiful hunters, sleek and satin-coated, pawing the ground, while others, with proudly curved necks

and flashing eyes, are galloping here and there with their masters on their backs. Some are ridden by fat English grooms, dressed quite *cap-à-pie*, talking cockney as they congregate together. Red coat after red coat trots up, and carriage after carriage full of pretty ladies, but quite properly and sufficiently distant in their looks to make it certain that they are English bred and born; and then last of all come the two whippers-in and dogs, nice sagacious creatures, which quietly lie down to rest and husband their strength until the right moment comes—and then we shall see. The wind blows fresh from the glorious mountains skirting that boundless plain, and one begins to wish the red coats would leave off hanging over the carriages and entertaining the *belles* within—because it is growing cold—when, just at the right moment, we are off. On go the dogs, and the horses and riders, and a little man on a rough pony, with a hatchet to *cut through the hedges* (hear this, O ye of Melton Mowbray and the Warwick Hunt!), because the infant hunt is too weak to leap much; and after come the carriages in a long file, driving out, as it were, to sea on the trackless waves of that placid ocean of grass. There was no road, and we bumped up and down on the inequalities of the grass in a

most comical fashion. The hunt crept slowly on seeking for a fox they could not find. On they went, forming the prettiest tableaux imaginable, down into narrow valleys, damp and dewy and emerald green, their sides clothed with low-tufted woods and luxuriant sedges—now hiding, now displaying the persevering red coats—standing some above, on the brow of the little rising hills; others below, winding in the sinuosities of the glades far onwards.

We in the carriages quietly followed the noiseless search after a fox that would *not* be found, and, mile after mile, crept on up little rises, and down into gentle dales, in the most singular drive I ever took in all my life. Every now and then I thought we must be overturned; but not a bit of it. One carriage ventured, and the rest followed like a flock of obedient sheep. The breezes, fragrant with the rich odour of herbs and flowers, swept softly around; broad shadows formed gigantic shapes on the grass; flocks of small birds rose, and dispersed at our approach; and the sallow, skin-clad *pastori*, mounted on shaggy ponies, or leaning on long staffs, came forth to stare at the *élite* of the great city below.

The scene, though moving, was silent; voices were lost on that great hunting-ground; the val-

leys still bent onwards, and led us enticingly away, away, far out into an unreal and dreamy world. By this time I had almost forgotten why we were there, and neither cared for nor heeded what was passing around. I desired to return, and so we hoisted sail and steered towards the huge dome rising so strangely out of nothing, like a great balloon sailing in a firmament of green. As we proceeded, the sheep in their folds started up and stared at the unusual invasion, and the *pastori* rested on their poles, gazing sadly upon us. Had it not been for them we never should have landed on the road.

When I look back on those hours spent on the boundless Campagna prairie, it comes before me like a vision, and the hunt and the silent procession like phantasmagoria, perfect and beautiful, but shadowy, soulless, and unreal—forms conjured up from the deep recesses of those enchanted valleys to lead one on, ever wandering, like the vague and endless strivings of a dream.

We returned as the sun was setting, and I am much inclined to believe those spirits melted away and vanished in the long shadows of coming night, and that ourselves were the only living beings who returned to the great city.

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When the Holy Father Sixtus, the second of that name, pope and martyr, was dragged to the stake by command of the Emperor Valerian, a young priest, of gentle and engaging aspect, followed him, and thus addressed him:—

“Father, whither are you going without your son and your deacon? Never before were you wont to offer sacrifice without me. Have I been wanting in my duty? Have I displeased you? Try me, and see if I am not capable of enduring torments, fire, or imprisonment for the sake of our Lord.”

“I do not leave you, my son,” replied the venerable pontiff, moved at the youth’s generous impatience for the rack and the flames of martyrdom; “my spirit shall watch over *you*, who are reserved for a greater and more glorious trial than is vouchsafed to *me*. In three days we shall meet in heaven!”

Then the young priest rejoiced to hear that he should be so soon with God, and, like a traveller disposing himself for a long journey, prepared all his worldly affairs, distributed his scanty means to the Christian poor, who bathed with their tears the deep-hidden altars in the mysterious catacombs, where the holy sacrifice was offered. His proceedings were not so well hidden but that

the Roman prefect got word of them, and, in high rage, sent for the young priest, and desired to be shown his hidden treasures.

"Bring to light," cried he, "those vessels of gold and candlesticks of silver you possess. They are wanted for the altars of the gods. Render also to Cæsar the things which are his; he needs the coin for the maintenance of his armies. Your God certainly coined no money on earth, and needs none now he is dead. Words alone were his revenues; keep thou them and give the gold to Imperial Cæsar."

The young priest, nothing daunted, replied:—

"You say the truth; the Church indeed is rich in inestimable treasure. I will make out instantly an inventory, and display to you all our possessions."

Then the young priest went round to all the holes and corners of the city: he sought in the sand-pits of the Esquiline (where herded the slaves who were branded, and the vile murderers escaped from justice) for the persecuted Christians, who were happy if there they might burrow like beasts, so that they had but peace. He went into foul holes and noisome courts—to the close-packed houses under the Tarpeian Rock—to the poor huts beyond the Quintilian meadows—and he as-

sembled at length all the Christian poor—maimed, deaf, and blind—in a certain spot on the Coelian Hill, together with the lepers, and the poor virgins, and orphans, and widows. He then went to the prefect, and told him to come, for the treasure was spread forth.

When the luxurious prefect, fresh from the scented waters of the marble baths, came among such a loathsome throng, he gathered up the folds of his toga, and burst forth in a great rage:—

“By the eternal Jove! I will teach you to mock me! How dare you, base Christian, to bandy pleasantries with me? What means this abject crowd?”

“Why are you displeased?” rejoined the young priest, unmoved by his rage. “It is gold that is low, vile, and mean, and incites men to violence. We have none, we despise it. You asked for the treasure of the Christian Church—lo! it is before you—the sick, the weak, the wretched, they are Christ’s jewels, and with them He makes up his crown! I have none other.”

Then the prefect grew more furious.

“Do you presume still to mock me?” cried he. “Have the axes, and the fasces, and the sacred eagles no power? In your vanity and your folly you desire to die the same vile death

as Jesus; but new tortures shall be invented—death shall be to you the sweetest boon.”

Then the prefect commanded his lictors to make ready a great gridiron, and to cast under it live coals nearly extinguished, that they might slowly burn; and Lawrence—for he was the courageous young priest—was stripped, and bound, and extended on the gridiron, until his flesh was slowly burnt off his bones; he all the while continuing in earnest prayer, and imploring the Divine mercy on his native Rome, and that, for the sake of his sufferings, the Christian faith might be planted there. So he died; and his remains were carried without the city to the Veran field, beside the road leading to Tibur.

In after years, when Constantine the Emperor had seen the glorious cross hanging in the blue sky over the Monte Mario, where he lay encamped against Maxentius, and had been converted, and had proclaimed Christianity the religion of the universe in the great hall of the Ulpian Basilica, he bethought him of this glorious martyr, and built a church over his tomb.

I quitted the city by the Porta San Lorenzo, anciently called Tiburtina, with its two antique towers, twin sisters of decay, and its long links of aqueducts stretching far away into the plain.



About a mile distant, on a dusty road now leading to modern Tivoli, the basilica appears rising out of solitary fields.

The portico, running the entire length of the front, might, except for the six Ionic columns—pilfered from some pagan temple—serve as the entrance to a large barn. Bare wooden rafters support it; and the walls are covered with fiery frescoes, quite smelling of brimstone and an unutterable place below. These atrocities are said to have been executed in the time of Pope Honorius III. I need not add that art was then almost at its dying gasp, weighed down under the influence of the dark ages. Here is the soul of St. Lawrence, represented as weighed on a balance by black fiends; the coronation of Peter Courtenay, as Emperor of the East, which took place in this basilica; dead men raised to life; souls rescued from purgatory by the Pope flying up to heaven—all wild, indescribable scenes, and represented in the stiffest form of Byzantine pattern.

The interior is of majestic proportions, every way worthy of the proud name of Basilica; but nevertheless there is a bare look about it, in spite of much magnificent decoration. The nave is supported by Ionic columns of classical workman-

ship, but the entablature is only whitewash, while the old wooden ceiling, carved in high relief, is infinitely rich, and coloured of a pale blue. The floor is *opus Alexandrinum*. The two ambones, or marble pulpits, from which were read the Gospel and the Epistle, have been spared, and are of rare beauty, ornamented with large slabs of rich red and green marbles, with mosaic borders of even more precious materials. The whole of the apsis, or tribune, considerably raised by marble steps, is supported by twelve magnificent pavonaz-zetto columns, all, save two, decorated with graceful Corinthian capitals. Unfortunately they are half sunk to accommodate the elevation of the tribune; their proportions can, therefore, only be judged of from below. Above is an arched gallery, supported by smaller columns. This forest-like mass of pillars, arches, and capitals, all of exquisite workmanship, produces a fine effect. Old frescoes ornament the vault of the tribune, mosaics decorate the arch. Under the high altar is a subterranean chamber, or "confession," visible from above, where lie enshrined the bones of St. Stephen and St. Lawrence. These remains are approached by Catholics with extreme awe, for, when restorations were going on in the church, in the reign of Pelagius II., the marble sepulchres

being opened, and the bones irreverently touched, all present died within ten days.

As I stood leaning against a pillar on the high-altar, I could not but feel penetrated by the solitude and singularity of the scene—the heavy damps of ages, the solemn traditions of the martyred dead breathed from these stern old walls. Not a sound was heard from the outward world; through a side door the sun streamed in from a spacious cloister, surrounded by columned arcades—all solitary, silent, forsaken.

I had had a fancy to visit the shrine, from a most singular tradition attached to it. In the reign of Pope Alexander II., about the time that the Normans invaded England, there lived in the convent a pious monk, who was so fervent in prayer that he invariably rose before daybreak to invoke the intercession of the holy martyrs, whose remains lie under the altar.

Once—it was a Wednesday in August—while kneeling there, he saw, with his open eyes, just as the daylight began to glimmer, the great doors open as of themselves, and a stately man, with a long beard, enter, habited for the performance of mass, accompanied by a deacon of a youthful and pleasant aspect, followed by a crowd of many soldiers, monks, and nobles, all in strange attire.

Although a numerous retinue, their footsteps raised no echo—the church was as quiet as when the monk prayed alone. Astonished at the strange sight, he rose from his knees trembling, and as the procession silently advanced up the nave, he hid himself behind a pillar and watched. As they approached the high-altar the monk softly approached the young priest (for his mind misgave him, and he was very curious, though sorely frightened), and, with much respect, whispered to him in these words:—

“I pray you tell me who are you that prepare with such solemnity for the morning mass?”

The youth with the pleasant aspect replied:—

“The one habited as a priest is St. Peter. I am Lawrence. On the anniversary of the day when our blessed Lord was betrayed by the wicked Judas’s kiss, and when the judges appointed that he should expire by the slow torture of the accursed tree, I also suffered martyrdom for his love; therefore, in memory of that day, we are come to celebrate the solemnity in this church built over my bones. St. Stephen is also among this blessed company; the ministers are angels of paradise; and the others are apostles, martyrs, and confessors who have all sealed their faith with their blood. They have had in re-

membrance the day of my death, and because it should be known of all and honoured to the glory of our Lord in the universal church, I have desired that you should see us with your mortal eyes, that you should make manifest this solemnity to all men. I therefore command you, when day breaks, go to the Pope, and tell him from me to come here quickly with all his clergy, and to offer up the blessed sacrifice for the people."

"But," returned the monk, now pale with awe and fright, as he saw the visionary multitude gathering round him, and felt the icy chill of their garments, "but how shall I, a poor monk, make the Pope believe my words if I have no sign of the holy vision?"

Then the young saint took off the cincture with which he was girded, and gave it to the monk, to show in token of all he had seen. The monk, being full of fear, returned to the monastery, and, as the day was now broke, assembled the brethren, told them of the vision, and showed them the cincture. Then all, knowing the holiness of the monk, believed his words, and went with him to the Pope, who then dwelt at the Lateran Palace, on the Coelian Hill, and he, after assembling the conclave of cardinals, gave great thanks to God and the holy St. Lawrence, and

celebrated solemn mass at the church, which is repeated every year. This, therefore, causes much fervour to St. Lawrence, and induces crowds to go on a certain Wednesday in August to venerate his remains.

Beyond the church of San Sebastiano, the Appian Way extends in a straight line to the tomb of Cecilia Metella, about a quarter of a mile distant, which stands crowning a rugged eminence, "firm as a fortress with its fence of stone." Turning to the left, in a large park-like expanse of the finest turf, one of the rarest prospects of old Rome opens before one. It is enchanting! How shall I describe it? I will try.

At my feet lies a mass of majestic ruins, at first confused and undefined, but by-and-by the long lines of walls, the turrets, and porticoes range themselves into symmetry and order, as under the touch of a fairy's wand, and I see the great circus of Romulus stretching in two long parallel lines before me to the length of 892 feet, a mighty enclosure, narrow in breadth, with turreted towers at the extremity near which I stand. Beyond are the walls of another square enclosure, supposed to be the stables of a riding-school connected with the circus. There are the marks of

arches still engraven on the great outer walls, which alone remain.

Above, the ground rises in a gentle swell, covered with vines and pale mystic olive trees, perhaps the most appropriate shade Nature ever devised to overshadow the ruins of the past. On the edge of the hill stands the church of San Sebastiano, and a dark cypress grove, while among the olive-grounds appear no less than three separate temples and porticoes. I know of no scene in or near Rome as satisfying to the mind as this little-frequented spot, where so much remains to tell of the grandeur of ancient Rome.

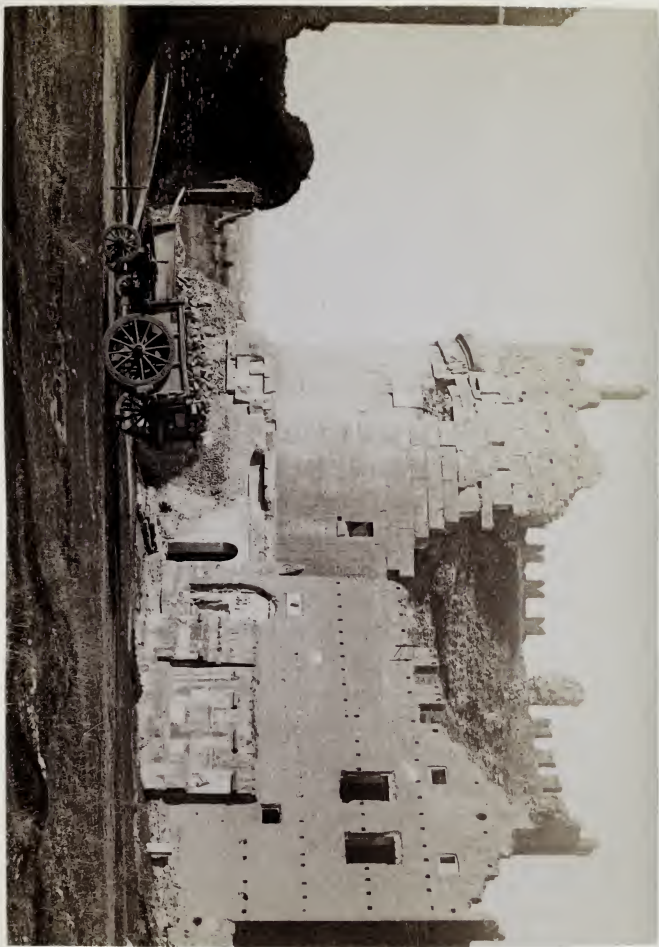
Following the line of the hill, beyond the olives and their accompanying vineyards, comes a soft picturesque plantation of feathery elms, standing out alone on the great background of the open Campagna, undulating here in endless inequalities of rounded hills and gently-sloping valleys, spanned by the majestic line of the Claudian aqueduct, marching, as it were, in an ever-advancing procession towards the Eternal City.

Above rise pale outlines of mountains and the rounded summits of the Sabine and Alban Hills, now, as the sun is sinking resplendent with delicate shades of pale pink and purple, melting into the blue vault of heaven in charming grada-

tions of colour. Here and there a white mass—Frascati or Tivoli, or the great convent, once the temple of Jupiter Latialis, on the summit of Monte Cavo—catches the lateral rays of the sinking sun, and shines out in dazzling whiteness.

I wandered on over the smooth green sward to rising hillocks opposite, on a level with the great round tomb of Cecilia Metella. Here Rome itself burst on my sight, with its walls and domes, turrets and spires, never more beautiful than when seen from this side, softened by foreground and foliage, and backed by the wooded slopes of Monte Mario and the steep Janiculum.

Around me fed an immense flock of sheep spreading themselves over the classic meadow; a herd-boy, with the brigand-pointed hat and gay-coloured girdle peculiar to the Campagna, sat upon a stone and watched the sheep and me. The vast mausoleum frowned down on me, flanked by its turreted walls, erected by the Gaetani in the middle ages, when this solid structure was transformed into a fortress. These walls have in their turn become ruins, adding to, rather than detracting from, the dignity of the tomb they enshrine. I suppose no one ever visited this monument without mental questionings in some sort



similar to those so gracefully expressed by Byron—to end, as did his, in this simple fact—

“That Metella died.
The wealthiest Roman’s wife :
Behold his love or pride !”

The ivy and trailing plants that now diadem the summit of this magnificent monument were fanned by the soft evening breeze. No sound was there to awake the remarkable echo which accurately repeats all sounds intrusted to it, so that when Crassus mourned the loss of “that lady of the dead,” the funeral solemnities must have been infinitely multiplied by endless repetitions of the wailings of the mourners, as if the infernal gods themselves and all the souls in the nether Hades had united in one vast chorus of groans and cries to bewail the deceased Cecilia. It seems strange that after the lapse of so many ages, the same echo which repeated the lamentations for the wife of the Roman senator, “so honoured and conspicuous,” should remain to serve with “damnable iteration” the impatience of every cockney visitor. That echo, too, must have borne many a rough message in the mediæval days when this tomb-fortress was besieged by the Connétable de Bourbon, who opened his trenches before the Aurelian wall and the Street of Tombs as re-

morselessly as though these venerable remains boasted not a single recollection. Fortunately for me, the present was tranquil as the past; silence reigned supreme.

I next descended into the arena of the circus of Romulus immediately beneath, through one of the ruined towers flanking its extremity. The interior, carpeted with brightest grass, is luxuriant in vegetation; whole gardens of variegated flowers, the wallflower, ivy, and low plants of ilex tufted the ruined walls, clothing the nakedness with the rich colouring of returning spring. A peasant was gathering fennel, and immediately approached, begging me, for the love of Heaven "*e per le lagrime della Madonna*," to assist him, and pointing to the scanty herbs which he had so carefully collected, in order to make into *minestra*, or broth; "for," said he, "we are starving in the city, and I am come out here to gather a few herbs, to us most precious."

It is from the well-defined remains of this circus, so much more perfect than any similar structure, that antiquarians collect their actual knowledge of the arrangements. It was first supposed to be the circus of Caracalla, and is so named by the accurate Eustace; but later excavations made by the Duke Bracciano, brother of

Torlonia, to whom the ground belongs, prove from inscriptions that it was erected to Romulus, the son of Maxentius, A.D. 311. From its admirable preservation, extreme beauty of position, and the poetry and interest of the ruins around it, this circus may be considered as unique among the remains of ancient Rome. The external walls are almost unbroken; in many places the vault supporting the seats still remains; the foundations of the two obelisks, terminating either extremity of the spina (running lengthwise through the circus, and forming the goals), still exist; and on one side stands a sort of tower where the judges sat. Near where I entered is a gallery, which contained a band of musicians, flanked by the towers I have mentioned, whence the signal for starting was given.

There were seven ranges of seats, containing upwards of twenty thousand spectators, and the extreme length of the circus was 1,006 feet. The chariots passed round the spina, and the most fearful accidents constantly occurred from the rapid driving, the narrowness of the space, and the jostling permitted, as also from the fact of the reins being fastened round the bodies of the charioteers. A large gate is found near the spot where they started, used only for the removal of

the bodies of those killed in these encounters, as the ancients deemed it a most portentous omen to pass a gate defiled by the passage of a dead body.

I studied the place till my imagination built up the ruins and filled the vast arena with spectators. I fancied the solemn procession advancing before the commencement of the games, headed by the emperor, seated on a superb car. Troops of young boys follow, and escort the charioteers driving the chariots destined for the race, some harnessed with two, some with four, and even six horses. Then come the athletes, almost naked, followed by troops of dancers, consisting of men, youths, and children, habited in scarlet tunics, and wearing a short sword and a helmet ornamented with feathers. They execute war-dances as they advance to the sound of flutes, and harps of ivory, and lutes. Hideous satyrs covered with the skins of animals, over-grown Silenuses, with all kinds of monsters in strange travesties, imitate with various contortions the more dignified dancers who precede them, seeking to divert the spectators by their extravagance.

Then appear a troop of priests, bearing in their hands vessels of gold and silver containing incense, perfuming the air as they advance. Their

approach is heralded by a band of music. Others bear the statues of the gods, who in honour of the occasion condescend to leave their temples. Some deities are borne in splendid cars enriched with precious stones; others, too sacred for the eyes of the *profanum vulgus*, are enshrouded in close litters; they are escorted by the patricians, and nobly-born children are proud to hold the bridle of the horses that draw them. The procession makes the circuit of the assembly, and is received with general acclamations, especially on the appearance of any idol particularly venerated by the credulous plebs. The statues are then placed in a temple on cushions of the richest materials. The emperor, descending from his chariot, pours out libations—the earthly Jupiter to his heavenly brother. The games are then proclaimed, and the chariots of green, blue, white, and red emerge from *carceri* and rush on their furious course, as a white cloth, thrown from the imperial gallery, gives the signal to begin.

There is a melancholy charm, a silent though eloquent language of the past, interwoven with these ruins (now warmed and tinged by the bright sun into a ruddy brown), inexpressibly enticing. It is a sheltered, sequestered spot to while away

the twilight hours, on the soft banks of grass under the shadow of the high walls, and surrender oneself up to fast-flitting fancies. I seated myself on the capital of a fallen pillar, among the long grass and waving reeds. The arches, the pillars, the towers, the ruined temples peeping out of the olive wood on the hill above, all spoke out plainly their sepulchral language: and the dark cypresses beside the catacomb church whispered also as the breeze moaned through their heavy branches.

I at length reluctantly withdrew, passing under the triumphal arch at the opposite extremity of the circus through which the victorious charioteers drove amidst the shouts and acclamations of the multitude. That ruined arch now abuts on a road leading to Albano; but time would not permit me on that occasion, to proceed farther.

CHAPTER III.

The Carnival—The Valley and Fountain of Egeria—Society and the Artist World.

I LOVE the Eternal City, after my fashion, with a devotion as unquestioning and entire as ever animated the bosom of an ancient Roman; but I am bound to confess that there is one period when Rome is most unacceptable—during the Carnival. A perfectly contagious plague of folly, vulgarity, license, noise, and ribaldry is abroad, and I would desire to retire from all possible contact with the incongruous scene. Solemn, grave, meditative Rome, with its dim memories looming through the chasm of bygone ages, its frowning palaces, its deeply-shadowed cavernous streets, its classical population (wanting only the toga to make proper senators), its religious displays, pious associations, popes, cardinals, churches, ruins, relics, palaces, sculptures, and mosaics, given up for ten days to vulgar commonplace tomfoolery! Oh, horrible! May I never see

"the Niobe of nations" so debase herself again! It was to me the most profoundly melancholy period of my stay, and I only went into the Corso to be able, from actual seeing, the more heartily to abuse the degrading scenes there enacted.

Elsewhere the Carnival may be very amusing in picturesque bright Italy, where the very beggars wear their gaudy rags with a kind of royal dignity, but it is utterly unsuitable to the grandeur of the Eternal City, and ought to be discontinued by general acclamation. If the Carnival, and the English, and the Codini were banished from Rome, there would remain nothing "to fright it from its propriety."

During the latter days of the Carnival, from two till six, all the world rushes madly to the Corso, now fluttering with flags, tapestry, and banners, while red and white hangings picturesquely drape the galleries, terraces, cornices, and windows of the stern old palaces "of other days," until their familiar faces become quite unrecognisable; for though masks were denied to the people, the houses certainly are allowed to adopt them. People are crushed into carriages and cars by dozens; streets overflow; the windows are crammed; the galleries and verandahs tremble with the

weight; the dust flies like sand on the desert; the sun shines too hot; the wind blows too chill; and after all this *chiasso*, "what come they out for to see?" A few dozen miserable ragamuffins of the lowest grade in dirty costumes hired in miserable slop-shops (for none but the lowest ever dream of a regular costume)—crowds of the refuse of a great city—troops of half-tipsy and much-excited soldiers—gentlemen with a charming return to infantine simplicity, dressed in "over-all" pinafores of brown holland; and ladies wearing blue wire masks, which make them look particularly hideous. Then one is pelted with black and dirty flowers, and blinded with showers of lime (the *gesso* of the studios put to such unholy abuses!) which every rascal may freely fling in one's face, and which descends also in deluges from above, making one's eyes intolerable for days (mine positively ache to write of it), screamed at, sworn at, stared at, by a vast crowd, where one recognises not a soul, so muffled up is every one in the aforesaid wire masks, veils, and great hats of the conspirator cut—all this martyrdom being occasionally rewarded by a tiny bag of sugar-plums thrown by a compassionate male friend, or a bouquet of decent flowers, which is either lost in the street, or the next instant torn violently from

one's grasp by a vile little street urchin, who makes a few *bajocchi* by its speedy sale!

The enormities committed by the ladies and gentlemen placed in the galleries are utterly outrageous and unaccountable; it is a serious, solemn system of folly unrelieved by any excuse of fun or frolic—a so-styled farce, without laugh or jest. English, and Germans, and Americans there take their stand with all the grave reserve of the sober nations of the North, and, from buckets filled with lime and baskets of unpleasant little musty bouquets, alternately shovel out bushels of lime, or pelt with faded flowers the crowd beneath, looking as composed and serious as if fulfilling some religious penance. Sure such a travestie of mirth never was beheld! The Italians *have* some fun about them, and play the harlequin like gentlemen; but the others!

The ancient Romans marked their season of *Ferix* by universal peace, happiness, and liberty. Slaves were manumitted, and masters waited on their servants at the feast; and doubtless they would thus have handed down the tradition to their descendants, had not the Christian strangers of modern days, called by the Romans “barbarians,” misapplied and abused the once genial and classic games in honour of the god Saturn,

who in the golden age ruled with his wife Astræa, or Justice, over the tribes of ancient Latium, and was worshipped in his lofty temple on the Capitoline Mount.

It was cold and disagreeably windy weather, and clouds of white dust strewed the streets, the houses, the carriages, poisoned the air, and clung to one's clothes, and face, and hair. The roars, the cries, the screams, the rush and roll of a great multitude, made it a scene of perplexity, annoyance, and discomfort not to be described. No one laughed—no one joked amid this Babel; it was noise without mirth, romping without play. I was inexpressibly disappointed and disgusted.

At five o'clock the Corso is cleared; and after the *carabinieri* have properly persecuted and annoyed the crowd, in order to make room, eight or ten riderless horses, covered with jingling chains and little sharp-pointed stars and triangles of gilt metal, rush or dawdle along according to their private feelings at the time, like runaway beasts that no one will take the trouble to catch. These miserable apologies are called the *Barberi*, because Arabian horses used to run here in the good old times; but nothing now remains of the Arabians except their name, as it is yet commemorated in a street called the "Ripresa dei Bar-

bari," where they are caught after accomplishing their dismal career.

This contemptible wind-up to the day's weariness is wretched beyond description. I thought of Ascot and Epsom, and the noble satin-coated steeds scarcely touching mother-earth in their giddy flight across the great heathery commons, and I could scarcely believe the scraggy animals which had just passed were of the same race. Each day I returned home from the Corso more weary and fatigued—a moving mass of white dust, sitting knee-deep in dirty bouquets and *débris* of *confetti*.

The only part of the Carnival that moved me with a sensation of enjoyment was the night of the "*Moccoli*." Dark-winged benignant night wrapped the flaunting scene in her sable mantle, harmonising the incongruous groups into broad masses. The hum of the multitude, united and softened by the gloom, rose up like a vast chorus of rejoicing; the ribald jest, the insolent attack, was mitigated as the lights came out by millions, above, below, around—"whiter than new snow on the raven's back," as Juliet says—a universe of bright twinkling stars. On the windows of the palaces, along the roofs, in the balconies, there were lights—myriads of lights; while below, every

creature among those moving thousands carried his or her taper—sometimes a whole bunch—dancing and dashing to and fro in the dark streets like planets fallen from their spheres, and fairly gone mad. After a time the glittering mass resolved itself into what appeared the deep precipitous sides of a mighty cavern, blazing with countless flames that ebbed to and fro in the evening breeze like waves of gems rising to meet the heavens. Meanwhile, the moon, pale and subdued, shone serenely in a softened atmosphere of blue.

The fun waxed fast and furious during the two hours' duration of this grand and dazzling pageant; but to my mind it was more subdued and chastened to the humanities of life than the *charivari* of the day. Those who merely looked on like myself, and bore no *moccolo*, were let alone and unmolested, or only saluted with now and then a long doleful cry of "*Vergogna, vergogna, senza moccolo, senza moccolo-o-o*"—a kind of indignant wail in accents of infinite disgust—or a sharp "*Come, signora! senza moccolo, par impossibile—è pazza!*" from some pert youth, who, finding his reproaches ineffectual, walked scornfully away, brandishing his light vigorously to assault a more congenial stranger.

The showers of lime and the bouquets had now vanished, all being intent on the exquisite fun of extinguishing each other's taper. And fun there was—real good living fun, not at all of the drawing-room sort—uproarious tumult, universal deafening noise, fighting, screaming, laughing, and struggling—men scuffling over the expiring remnants of a light, women stretching half over the balconies and struggling out of carriages after obstinate tapers held securely on high; whilst, lo! from behind—thump!—it is gone; and the cry, "*Senza moccoli!*" rings out, and then all separate in chase of new fun, and are instantly re-engaged, fighting hard as ever. "*Moccoli, morte a chi non porta moccoli!*" sounds again; men rush hither and thither, carrying torches, paper lanterns, and pyramids of light, dancing to and fro on long poles, until the cry becomes like the watchword of a general conflagration.

Along the street there were windows and doors full of merry Roman girls—jolly, rollicking grisettes!—mad with fun and laughter, holding high above their heads the fated *moccoli*, which crowds of gallants were endeavouring by indescribable feats to extinguish. How they did laugh!—it was delicious! They were always at the same game whenever we passed, and would

be at it now had the bell not sounded at eight o'clock—that horrid bell—when all the world is driven away, and the last *moccolo* is blown out by those disagreeable *carabinieri*, who seem to have a wicked spite against the mirth in which they cannot join.

And so it is over, and Rome quiet. The hosts of strangers are gone, disappearing in great machines dragged by strings of horses to the station; and the streets are silent, and the carriages no longer lined with white to save them from the showers of *confetti*; and I am truly glad, and never wish to see Rome desecrated by the Carnival again.

I now resume my account of that portion of ancient Rome in the vicinity of the tomb of Cecilia Metella. On returning a few days afterwards, I passed through the circus of Romulus, out by the ruined Arch of Triumph on the Albano road, and found myself in a feathering grove of elm trees, fringing the inequalities of the Campagna. The perfume of violets blossoming in the fine herbage scented the refreshing breeze, and swept over the verdant expanse, singularly and most picturesquely broken by ruins—here, a temple; there, a ruined portico; near by, a wall overmantled by ivy—all serving to mark the rise and

fall of the ground, backed by the Claudian aqueducts on one side, while on the other Rome herself, plainly defined, crowned the Cœlian and Esquiline Hills. Nature and art combined to form a scene of Arcadian beauty and Palladian grandeur; the past, the present, and the future were visible to the reflective eye; the broad heavens overshadowed all; and the setting sun, that eye of the universe, gave the final touch to the harmonious unity of this sublime picture.

I strolled on through the open wood towards the small ruined church of St. Urbano alla Caffarella, once a temple of classic beauty, dedicated, it is said, to Bacchus, whose picturesque worship was especially suited to these wild idyllic solitudes, where the sighing of the wind across the Campagna might be mistaken for Pan with his reedy pipes wooing some coy nymph; or where the summer breeze might whisper the voice of Zephyr as he approached the chariot of the light-footed Iris; or where the deep shadows in the clustered trees resolve themselves into the forms of dryads and hamadryads, half hidden in green leaves beside clear brooks whose bubbling waters sparkle on the flowery turf. It is easy even now to transform every ruder sound into the discordant laugh of a satyr or a mocking faun; to people the

valleys with green-haired nereids, and to believe that a spirit or a god appears in the grotesque contortions of the gnarled trees around. Solitude feeds these fancies. I was alone, and gave free rein to my imagination; built up every ruined altar and decaying temple whose ruins now strew that verdant plain; filled the portico of Bacchus' ancient fane with worshippers; crowned the hills with glowing Bacchantes, torch in hand, ready to celebrate the Brumalia with shouts and cries as they bear aloft the golden image of the god crowned with vine-leaves and purple grapes. I pictured, too, those pure and poetic existences of the "graceful superstition" of old, the nymphs, whose haunts were in the wooded dale or piny mountain, "in forests by slow stream or pebbly spring, in chasms and watery depths," dividing under their gentle sway all the realms of Nature.

But to resume. I now had reached the temple of Bacchus, barbarously disfigured by being converted into a church, which has in its turn become a ruin. Below the decaying altar a dark door leads down into the catacombs, which extend even to this distance into the Campagna; but the door has been closed ever since a party of young collegians, attended by their tutors, were lost in the gloomy passages. Below the temple, or

church, the ground rapidly sinks into a deep and narrow valley, enclosed by soft rounded hills, at whose base runs a stream—the Almo, I believe. Immediately opposite is a dark grove of ilex trees, circular in shape, still called "*Il bosco sacro*," one of those spots anciently consecrated by solemn pagan ceremonies, where the Gods revealed prophetic secrets to the priest or priestess of the neighbouring temple.

Descending into the dell, and passing to the left under the hill, I reached a deep grotto, overshadowed by fluttering aspen, feathering ash, long trailing garlands of fresh May, yellow broom, and luxuriant weeds, which beautified and concealed the ruins to which they clung. The sides of the grotto are covered with moss, the slabs along the floor are slippery with the same verdant carpet, and there is a bubbling of waters with a fresh earthy smell of spring and flowers, which is perfectly delicious. The grotto is entirely uncovered, the sides are walled, and at the lower end, under a solid arch, lies the mutilated statue of a recumbent nymph, buried in ivy, once that "Egeria, the sweet creation of some heart which found no mutual resting-place." For I was now standing within the sacred precincts of Egeria's retreat; and the "cave-guarded" spring that

gushed from beneath the statue, and found its way into the valley along little stone-conduits bordering the walls, is said, by tradition, to be the very rill beside whose running waters Numa met his goddess and his love. Antiquarians assure us that it is not so, and that tradition has no right to appropriate this sweet spot consecrated by Nature to the sylvan deities; but I love to go in a believing spirit, and to accept the beauty, actual and suggestive, around me.

A tradition so replete with beauty, a spot so exquisitely romantic, are subjects too ideal and delicate to endure the rough handling of antiquarian critics. I do not desire their lore. I will only listen to the bubbling of that sparkling little stream as it dances forth through the moss and the weeds into the valley beyond. Juvenal is said, in classical days, to have angrily lamented that the walls of the grotto were plated with rich marbles, and the fountain artificially decorated. His ire might be now appeased, for it has returned to its pristine state of solitude and simplicity—the grassy margin and the naked rock. The marble linings, the pillars, the statues, have disappeared; and Nature alone adorns the monument of the past. Egeria herself is now but a mutilated torso!

Of all the legends of infant Rome none is more poetical than the story of Numa and his goddess-wife Egeria, who descended from her place among the gods to inspire him with wisdom and counsel. Tradition says that after living some years with his first wife Tatia, the daughter of Tatius, co-sovereign with Romulus of yet un-built Rome, he became a widower, and was chosen to govern the growing state founded on the Seven Hills. It was then that Egeria came to his aid, and in those mysterious meetings under the sacred grove beside the little streamlet dictated that code of just and wise laws which the Roman people so prized and loved.

But, alas! Numa was not always faithful to his spirit-bride. Egeria had rivals of her own incorporeal and mystic nature, for Numa met also the Muses in these nocturnal interviews, and boasted that he was specially distinguished by one *Tacita*, the Muse of Silence, to whom he erected temples. But his gentle love, Egeria—his tried and constant friend—was not to be disheartened: she loved him to the end, and we shall find her again among the classic shades of Nemi proving her love in death.

There is an extraordinary mysticism mixed up in the character of Numa, full of graceful interest

and incident—his love for Egeria, her vale, her grotto with its sparkling rill, his meetings with the Muses, and the strange story told by Plutarch of his interview with Jupiter. When the Aventine was neither enclosed nor inhabited, and abounded with fresh springs and shady groves haunted by satyrs and fauns, Numa mixed the fountain where they drank with honey and wine, and thus intoxicated and caught them. They in their rage quitted their natural forms and assumed many dreadful and fearful shapes, but finding that their arts could not prevail to frighten Numa and induce him to break their bonds, they consented to reveal to him the secrets of futurity, and ended by bringing down Jupiter from heaven to discourse with him. “But,” says the story quaintly, “it was Egeria who taught Numa to manage the matter, and to send away even Jupiter himself propitious.”

Standing musing under the shade of the sacred grotto, I had well-nigh forgot another ruin near at hand, also furnishing a world of recollections. I wandered along the valley in search of it, and came upon the ruins of a brick temple on the border of the river—small, indeed, but well proportioned—said to be dedicated to the god Rediculus, who prompted Hannibal, when lying there encamped, to retreat from Rome. But this

tradition yields to another yet more interesting, which declares it to be the identical fane erected in honour of Fortuna Muliebris on the spot where Coriolanus met his wife and mother, and was prevailed on by their entreaties to draw off his army from Rome. What reader of Shakespeare does not recall that sublime scene where Coriolanus, surrounded by the tents of the assembled Volscians, advances to greet Volumnia and Virgilia in these words?—

“My wife comes foremost; then the honour’d mould
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But, out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!
. I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others.”

I reascended the steep hill to the temple of Bacchus, feeling that I had pondered over a delicious page in the annals of the magic past.

There are cliques and sets at Rome, more varied and antagonistic in character than are often to be found in much larger and more populous cities. I have belonged a little to all, entirely to none. There is the ecclesiastical set composed of cardinals, monsignori, and high dignitaries of the Church—very slow, pompous, and humdrum indeed, dreaming away their lives in the discharge of various pious duties, and hun-

dreds of years behind the busy, bustling life of the North, where climate and habits perpetually drive people onwards as if the very furies pursued them. They lazily drive about to each other's palazzi in big red coaches drawn by black horses, with a retinue of antiquated retainers in the most singular liveries, coats hanging down to their heels, and cocked-hats on their heads. Within sit the starch, solemn old gentlemen in purple and red, their pale parchment countenances never relaxing into a smile.

Once past the city gates, it is "their custom of an afternoon" to descend and walk slowly along the dusty roads between high walls which entirely obscure the prospect, attended by their extraordinary retainers, who look antique enough to have handed Mrs. Noah into the ark. Most courteously do these princes of the Church salute all who pass them; and there were two or three whom I well know by sight, from my admiration of their holy and benevolent countenances. Now and then these "grave and reverend signiors" give a reception, when some female relation of high degree receives the guests and does the honours. The Holy Father himself leaves the Vatican occasionally by one of the gates for his *trottata*, generally dressed in white, and wearing

a broad hat of red silk. Then it is etiquette for every passer-by to go on his knees in the dust and receive the Papal blessing, rendered doubly valuable by the benignant grace with which it is bestowed. But since "the evil days" of his flight and the siege, no welcome or applause ever greets his presence.

It is a ridiculous and idle prejudice for people to talk and write about the immorality of the Roman clergy; such nonsense can only proceed from the pens of ignorant, prejudiced, and evil-minded persons.

The higher ranks of the Romish clergy are remarkable for their moral conduct, serious demeanour, and blameless lives. It is most rare indeed to hear in any direction of the slightest *légèreté*, and when it is detected it is remorselessly and unhesitatingly punished. A certain monsignore gave scandal this winter by a too mundane and vain conduct and deportment, without, I believe, much, if any, criminality. He was at once degraded in the face of all Rome. The cardinals are occasionally present in general society—in rooms where there is no dancing, but their manners are so reserved and distant (except to particular male friends) that they can scarcely be reckoned among the company. The parish

priests of Rome are generally a most active and excellent body of men, irreproachable in conduct, and, but for the unhappy political dissensions which divide from them the sympathies of the people, would be justly and sincerely beloved. It is extremely rare to hear a whisper of any misconduct among the religious houses of either sex. When discovered, it is uncompromisingly punished.

But to return to my immediate topic—Society. There is the set of Roman princesses, grand, haughty dames, proud of their descent from the Cornelias, the Lucretias, and the Portias of the republic. They are, as a body, remarkable for correct conduct, extreme devotion, and a lamentable want of intellectual cultivation. I believe many a raw English school-girl is better acquainted with Roman history than these princesses, born and reared amid the imposing ruins of the city of the Cæsars. They dislike strangers unless especially introduced—particularly Protestants, who are not considered Christians—and clan and club together in a *noli me tangere* spirit very unusual among the Italians, who are in general an easy, hospitable, polite, and facile people. But the Romans generally, and especially the princes and princesses, are remarkable for their senseless pride.

They are unceasingly haunted by the notion of their descent from the Fabiuses, the Maximuses, and Cæsars of old, and endeavour, very unsuccessfully, to ape the dignified and solemn bearing of those ancient pillars of the state—a proceeding absolutely ridiculous in the degenerate state of Rome in the nineteenth century.

As to the ladies—my special province—one must forgive them their foolish arrogance when one sees the superb palaces, the magnificent and glittering saloons they inhabit; the trains of retainers and servants that crowd their halls, and wait on their slightest caprice. From infancy they are nurtured with a luxury, and looked on by their inferiors with a devoted respect and veneration, quite sufficient to turn wiser brains, and confuse more expanded intellects. Each lady has her own *entourage* and circle—clients like the followers of the ancient senators; and although her palace may occasionally be opened for a grand ball to the *profanum vulgus*, the magnificent mistress, her debt to popularity once paid, speedily closes her doors and retires to enjoy her *morgue* and her nineteen bosom friends, washing her princely hands from all further contamination with the common or unclean.

Then there is the diplomatic set, of necessity

more hospitable and affable *outwardly*, but in reality excessively exclusive. Each ambassadress forms a little court of her own, composed principally of her compatriots, the *état-major* of his excellency, and some distinguished hangers-on. Among these ladies are some women of intellect, wit, and beauty.

Then there is the American set, a numerous body, extremely sociable, and remarkable for general intelligence, bustle, and go-ahead propensities, and for the fragile and delicate beauty of the younger ladies—those pale daughters of the New World, whose alabaster skins, melting blue eyes, and flaxen hair are nowhere more conspicuous than among the olive-complexioned, black-eyed, luscious beauties of the South.

There is also a learned set at Rome, necessarily cosmopolitan, but decidedly Catholic; and there is a rabidly Protestant set, which considers the Pope the abomination of desolation, and have been heard to stigmatise his blessing as a curse. It is wonderful they ever trust themselves within the walls of Babylon, for the spirit of the place can never visit them. Then there is that awful amalgamation of dissipation, riches, scandal, and exclusiveness, the English set, who have appropriated to themselves an entire quarter of the city,

comprising the beautiful Pincian, where they have their English shops, English prices, books, papers, servants, and *cuisine*. They live much together, sharing only in the grand festivities of the Roman nobles and the diplomatic corps. They are a powerful faction, and are constantly endeavouring to Anglicise Rome by dint of money and overbearing arrogance. They picnic in solemn temples, and underground in dim and dreary baths; drink champagne among moss-grown tombs; ride donkeys to Hannibal's camp; get up horse and hurdle races over the consecrated soil of the classic Campagna; light up the Coliseum with blue and red lights; sit on camp-stools in St. Peter's; and invade every gallery, palace, or monument with the Saxon tongue and Saxon ill-breeding. Those who wish fairly to judge of Rome proper should "stay over the season," and see the English all out, in order to understand how much they have spoilt it. They give no end of balls and suppers, dance in Lent when they dare, turn their backs on the Pope, ridicule the Catholics, talk shocking scandal—which the Italians *never* do—and spend oceans of money, causing Rome, at this moment, to be the dearest residence on the Continent.

Last of all, there is the artist world at Rome—

a merry, genial, cosmopolitan throng, compounded of French, Italians, Germans, Swiss, English, and Americans—a jovial, many-hued company, boasting names that make one's soul thrill at the remembrance of the immortal works they are handing down to posterity. Yes, I love the artist world at Rome, and am proud to reckon some of its world-wide names among my friends:—Gibson, now, alas! gone—who, in his life, so identified himself with Greek art and Greek sculpture that he seemed to have acquired the calm repose, the dignity, and the wisdom of an ancient philosopher. Who that ever really knew Gibson did not admire his simple, amiable nature and high-minded rectitude of character? He was at once the most modest and the most unflinching of men; pleased with the simplest meed of sincere praise, yet regardless of the opinion of the whole world if to obtain its applause he was obliged to compromise his artistic creed, the religion of his soul. A mind of this temper would have been great in any walk of life.

Then there was Crawford, the American sculptor, whose gallery still remains; whilst among the living are Story and Dessoulavy, Rogers and Tiltan, and Miss Hosmer, the loved pupil of Gibson, and Page, and Shakespeare Wood—Americans all but

the last named. Nor must I forget Penry Williams, the greatest of English painters at Rome—combining the dewy softness of Constable, the clear, brilliant tone of Callcott, with a purity of style and absolute perfection of colouring all his own.

A great name, too, is that of Tenerani, the head of the modern Italian school, to be judged of in his noble works—uniting the force and grandeur of Thorwaldsen to the grace of Canova.

There are life and vitality yet in the modern Italian school, spite of much feebleness and affectation, as must be allowed when contemplating Tenerani's immortal work, "The Angel of the Resurrection"—perhaps the most sublime effort of modern sculpture. Then there was Overbeck, a monkish old man, who lived shut up in the grim old Cenci Palace in the filthy Ghetto—a man so silent, of aspect so uninviting, and with manners so austere, that one never could believe him capable of creating those virgins, angels, and glorified spirits of ideal purity, breathing the very airs of Paradise. Cornelius also, that great father of modern German painting, long lived on the summit of the Pincian in the very house where, thirty years ago, he, in conjunction with Schadow and Overbeck, determined to break the bonds of custom, and first dreamt of, and then achieved, the revival

of fresco-painting, now, by their works at Düsseldorf and Munich, spread over all Europe. The walls of this house are still decorated by their first efforts, which, with some crudeness and inexperience in the use of a novel material, indicate uncommon and unusual power. Riedel too, that wonderful master of the German school who still lives, and who lights up his nymphs with beams as it were snatched from the living sunshine; and Mayer, and Coleman, the Paul Potter of our century; and many other rising geniuses among the younger artists; for I have but named the *dictators* in the republic of art of the present century. But I must stop, for in these recollections of the artist world of Rome my pen runs riot with pleasant memories.

CHAPTER IV.

A Classical Excursion to Albano and Nemi, intended for those fond of the History of the Past.

WE started four in number—a delightful party—on a fine, fresh, sunshiny morning in “the merrie month of May,” for Albano. We were all well acquainted—and the gay jest and the piquant rejoinder went gaily round. We laughed at each other, at ourselves, at all the world, going forth into the Campagna through the heavy portal of San Giovanni Laterano, jealousy guarded by *cara-binieri*.

Our party consisted of very various elements. There was an elderly friend acting duenna to our wilder spirits; calm, pleased, silent herself, but ready to share in the mirth of others. There was one highly gifted, my friend H——ns, the son of a poetess, a poet himself, and antiquarian, an historian, a theologian—nothing came amiss to his well-stored mind; each stone had for him its suggestive interest, every monument its eloquent

history, every lovely phase of Nature its idyl. Art and antiquity through his mouth became simultaneously articulate. I always said, if the dry bones of "Murray's Guide" could be vivified, animated, and clothed in less "dry-as-dust" garments, the result would be H——ns, the most instructive compendium and agreeable companion that ever turned over the moss-grown remains of antiquity. Our *third* was S. W——, a sculptor, looking for *form* in all things, and disdaining colour and gradations of shade as things of nought, full of his art and of the antique, and withal eminently good-natured and obliging. As for the fourth, so delicate a subject as a description of myself cannot be expected. I cannot take my own portrait, as the painters did in the Florence gallery of celebrated artists, looking into a glass; for where can I find a mental mirror, "showing the inmost part," by which to draw myself? I must leave my readers to make their own sketch of me, first imploring their good offices not to paint me too black.

Well, on we rattled along the paved road, traversing the Campagna *dans tous les sens*, as the French have it. Nowhere, I believe, in the world does one drive out into a perfect wilderness, devoid of houses or inhabitants, on a paved road,

rough and jolting as the high street of a country town, except in this singular and exceptional place. A few miles and we were sailing along on the waving expanse of that grassy ocean, the turf bright as unset emeralds, its uniform colour broken by unenclosed fields of corn, with here and there tufts of luxuriant poppies, broad tracts of yellow buttercups, great staring daisies, and sweet violets. To the left lay the solemn lines of the Augustan aqueducts, linking the Alban Hills, and the pure springs that rise in their deep bosoms, to the service of that queen of cities reposing yonder on her seven-hilled throne. Each arch forms as it were a separate picture, presenting new scenes of beauty—a gallery as unique as it is singular.

Beyond the fair face of nature nothing arrested our attention for some miles. To the right was the distant outline of the Street of Tombs, mound after mound of dark ruins marking the successive monuments. A mass of ruins, void and without form, close on the Appian Way, was pointed out by H——ns as *Roma Vecchia*, so named because the *contadini* firmly believe this to have been the site of the ancient city, the why or the wherefore being utterly obscure. It was probably a temple or a villa bordering the “*Viarum Regina*,” along whose pavement the chariots and

the horsemen went and came, thick as the falling leaves in an autumnal gale.

We came at length to the foot of the Alban Hills, which rise abruptly from the plain. Before ascending, the modern road is joined by the old Appian Way, which shoots forth out of the city through the Porta San Sebastiano, straight as an arrow launched from a bow. If we had had eyes sufficiently long-sighted, we might have seen the sentinel keeping guard over the crumbling arch of Drusus.

Where the ancient and the modern roads unite is a wretched tumble-down wayside *osteria*, called Frattocchie—a cut-throat-looking place enough—redolent of fleas, sour wine, dirt, and bad smells, especially by reason of its *cucina cucinante*, in which garlic would decidedly predominate. H——ns here stopped the carriage, not from any uncharitable purpose of condemning us to eat in such a hole, but to call our attention to the spot as being the supposed site of Clodius's murder by Milo, the friend of Cicero, whom he chose for his advocate on his trial for the murder. But Cicero arriving at the Forum in a litter, and seeing the space filled with soldiers under arms, and Pompey himself seated on high as president, was so confounded and terrified that he could

scarcely give audible utterance to that celebrated discourse, "Pro Milone," which would alone have immortalised his eloquence.

H——ns recalled our early recollections of that most fascinating of books next to the Arabian Nights, Plutarch's Lives. "It chanced," said he, "unfortunately, that Milo, going to Lanuvium to consecrate a priest, met Clodius, surrounded by his clients and retainers, on this spot, where then stood a temple to the Bona Dea. Milo was quietly reposing in his coach, like a luxurious Roman gentleman, in company with his wife Fausta, the daughter of Sylla; but, as in the later mediæval days of Montagues and Capulets, the servants of either party took up the well-known feud of their masters, and commenced fighting. One of the servants of Milo pierced Clodius's shoulder, and Milo, considering that if Clodius survived he would eternally devote him and his house to the furies of revenge, ordered his attendants to finish him. And so fell Clodius."

We drove on, rejoicing in the knowledge we were thus pleasantly picking up like flowers along the hedge-rows, and began to mount the hill at a slow pace.

The road was bordered on the left by low rocky banks, with here and there a mass of ruins

or a group of great spreading pine trees, whose sharp lines cut against the radiant sky with the full force of Italian contrast. Flowers wreathed many-coloured garlands over the reddish rock; little green lizards rushed to and fro amid perfumed blossoms; gay butterflies fluttered; and spring birds sang an audible chorus of jocund spring. A little shrine to the Madonna was cut out of the tufa rock, and decorated with flowers; a lamp burned before her image, which was enclosed in a glass case; in front kneeled a contadina in the pretty costume of the country, with rich red folds falling from her head over a shawl of white muslin.

To the right lay vineyards and gardens, looking like gigantic patches of basket-work from the yellow *canne*, or reeds, to which the young vines and just opening plants were trained; olives waved their pale, shadowless boughs among the vineyards, spreading their fresh, whitish leaves towards the sun. Here and there a valley sank deep down, and a stream rushed away in the direction of the Campagna, trembling over great masses of rock, and cooling the air around. This was the near view.

Behind lay the Queen of Capitals—her domes, towers, spires, and walls thickening on the low

hills far away—vast, shadowy, dreamy—melting into the azure haze of distance.

The rich and many-tinted wilderness, on whose soil uprose the cities of Latium, spread around in its vast length and breadth; while to the far right a long monotonous line marked the shore towards Ostia and Antium (Porto d'Anzio), with the Tyrrhene Sea visible beyond all, a sheet of burnished gold. There was immensity in that view, suggestive of chaos and eternity. The land ran into the glistening sea undefined, and the mountains melted into the clouds, knitting the elements together in one great mystic whole around the Eternal City throned on those blue hills! What takes me a certain time to write I drank in with a few delicious glances. However, it was soon over, and we had now approached within sight of Albano, scarcely to be perceived until one is under its gateway. As to the lake, so utterly invisible is it from this side, that one would be ready to venture one's life that no lake nearer than Thrasymane existed.

To the left, close on a cluster of villas standing in rich orange and lemon groves, at the entrance to Albano, stand the massive ruins of a tomb, second only in size to that of Cecilia Metella, once encased with white marble, now but

a mere round of crumbling brickwork, crowned with a perfect diadem of plants, shrubs, and grasses. That tomb, H——ns informed us (and so do the guide-books, only they want his pleasant, well-turned sentences and interesting details, giving as 'twere the day and hour), was now admitted on all hands to be the resting-place of Pompey's ashes, borne by the hands of his second wife, Cornelia, from Egypt, she never resting until she had deposited the monumental urn within sight of the city over which he had ruled, and where men had surnamed him "the Great."

Pompey, defeated in the final struggle at Pharsalia, fled to his fond and faithful Cornelia, who fainted as she heard of his mischance. Together in one Seleucian galley they sought the hospitality of Ptolemy, King of Egypt, at Pelusium; for Pompey, Roman though he was, could not bring himself to ask safety and mercy at the hands of conquering Cæsar. A council was called among the Egyptians, and it was resolved that Pompey must perish, on the mean principle of subserviency to Cæsar. He was brought from the ship where he had left Cornelia, whose eye followed his every motion, suspicious of the event. She saw him seat himself in the little craft—a fishing-boat—and take out to read a speech he had pre-

pared to address to Ptolemy. As the boat approached the shore, hope shot into her sinking heart. A crowd of persons advanced (as she thought to do him honour), but at the moment when, stepping from the boat, he placed his foot on shore, a base assassin came from behind and stabbed him in the back. She saw him fall, like an ancient Roman, covering his face in his mantle, and she saw no more. She too fell, and a shriek so piercing rent the air, that it reached the cruel group gathered about the dying hero.

"That shriek," said H——ns, "chronicled by Plutarch, has come down to us sharp and clear through accumulated centuries. I never pass that grey ruin without picturing to myself the stately Roman matron landing at Antium, followed by a long train of mourners and retainers—pale and worn, yet dignified, shrouded in her mourning robes—bearing the urn containing the ashes of her husband to this very spot, on his broad lands near ancient Alba."

The modern town of Albano is as ugly a place as I would *not* wish to see, consisting of one long street, where everybody can see everybody else, a great deal of dust, some tawdry shops, and two tolerable hotels—which to me, however, would be unbearable, because standing

in the centre of the town. I had pictured to myself an elegant, classic Locanda on the borders of the lake, overshadowed by evergreen woods. To be sure there are the very pretty gardens of the Villa Doria, always deliciously cool and shady, and at all hours hospitably thrown open to the public—a favour the more to be esteemed as the family spend there a portion of every autumn. The site of Alba Longa, however, must not be sought for in the modern town, but in a quite different situation. We drove through the long street out on the further side of Albano: still no signs of lake, not even a *soupçon* of where a lake *might be*. As we descended a steep hill through rocky banks overshadowed by trees, the country looked wild and pretty, tossed about in a picturesque manner.

Close on the gates of Albano, towards Ariccia, on the brow of a descent, H——ns called our attention to a most remarkable tomb—a square mass of majestic proportions surmounted by four low obelisks at the corners, with a pedestal in the centre. Two of the obelisks have disappeared, and the summit has become quite a little grove of low shrubs and young trees and creepers. H——ns laughed at the idea of this tomb being the burying-place of the Horatii and Curiatii, as

has been affirmed. Their celebrated conflict took place much nearer Rome. "There is no doubt," he said, "that it was Etruscan workmanship, and erected to Aruns, son of Porsenna;" that same king we all know so well, from Macaulay's spirited lines beginning—

"Lars Porsenna of Clusium by the nine gods he swore,
That the great house of Tarquin should suffer wrong no more."

On a precipitous hill opposite, and about a mile distant from Albano, the small town, or almost village, of Ariccia crowns the height. Between lies a deep valley, but the twin hills of Ariccia and Albano are linked together by a stupendous viaduct, at least one hundred and fifty feet high, with four or five rows of open arches; a most striking achievement of the late Papal Government, by which, at an immense cost, it was erected.

It is wonderful to see Ariccia such a vulgar, dirty, modern little place, and to think that it has been sung by Horace and Virgil, and chronicled by Livy and Plutarch, none of whose writings will certainly gain in pleasing associations by a near knowledge of it as it is. There is a miserable inn, to which strangers resort during the malaria season in Rome. We left the carriage and walked along the road, crossing the viaduct,

and admiring the fine views over the Campagna, the sea, and the vast unfathomable woods; but we could still not discern a trace of the cosy Alban Lake, whose waters are so deeply buried under the overshadowing hills.

On leaving Ariccia, another valley intervenes between it and an adjacent height half a mile off, on which Genzano, whither we were bound, is situated. We had now penetrated into the deep primeval woods of aged oaks, chestnuts, gnarled ash, and elm, that clothe the lower portion of the Alban Mountains as with a great mantle, the entire range ending in the elevated summit of Monte Cavo, now conspicuous to our left, and crowned by a white-walled convent. This convent occupies the site of what was once the temple of Jupiter Latialis built by Tarquin the proud as the solemn gathering-place of the forty-seven cities of the Latin Confederation—a splendid position, commanding the entire land from Soracte to Antium. “No profane hand,” said H——ns (who had become more and more eloquent and interesting as we advanced further and further into the classic scenes of Rome’s early history), “dared to desecrate or injure that sacred shrine, the renowned scene of the *Feriæ Latinæ*, endeared to the superstitious remembrance of all Latium,

where Julius Cæsar had celebrated his triumph as dictator, and thousands of less illustrious generals enjoyed the honours of the Ovation. Even in the beginning of the last century ruins remained, stupendous enough to mark the temple's original size and magnitude; but they were all destroyed and appropriated by Cardinal York, the last of the Stuarts, for the purpose of erecting that hideous Passionist convent now visible like a white spot on the summit. Ruins, marbles, columns, statues, all were ruthlessly swept away, leaving the consecrated site of Rome's early triumphs without a vestige of the past—an act of destruction the more extraordinary, as the reigning pontiff, Pius VI., both understood and admired art and antiquity. All that now remains is the old Via Sacra, vestiges of which are to be still traced through the chestnut woods on the face of the mountain opposite Rome, in the direction of Rocca di Papa."

The venerable primeval forests that surround Genzano and Ariccia are exquisite. Fine single trees stand forth in grassy openings, where early spring flowers of those bright hues peculiar to the South spring out of the moss-grown rocks that break the surface of the ground in picturesque confusion. Here and there the wood deepens

under a lower growth of ilex, laurel, box, and arbutus, their dark boughs lending a mystic character to a sylvan region.

Here Numa wandered in retired and secret places, haunted by the nymphs whose soft voices he loved. Here of old dwelt Zephyr and Echo, and here murmured many a trickling stream. We had no time to dwell on these bewitching memories, but proceeded along a magnificent terrace—once the Appian Way, now the high road from Rome to Naples—and thundered through a splendid avenue of fine old trees, called the *Olmata*, leading into the small town or *paese* of Genzano, the last of those attractive outskirts of Rome to which its inhabitants escape during the dangerous summer heats.

“Look,” said H——ns, “at that round hill just in advance of the town and nearer the plain, covered by vineyards, and crowned by a mediæval tower. That is said to be the site of ancient Corioli, whither Coriolanus fled when exiled from Rome. From thence he issued, leading the Volscian forces against his native city; and there he returned when, overcome by the entreaties of his mother and wife, he withdrew from the siege. No ruins remain of the ancient city where the Roman general ended his days. Some say that

he was murdered by the Volscians out of resentment at his conduct—others that he lived to be an old man, and was heard often to complain ‘that the evils of exile bore much heavier on the aged.’ Pliny says that even in his day no traces of Corioli were visible. The hill is now called Monte Giove.”

Genzano consists of one broad street on the declivity of a hill. Below are hills crowned with feudal castles, remnants of the middle-age dominion of the stout Roman barons, now ruined and romantic adjuncts to a landscape both grand and beautiful. The valleys lead down into the vast expanse of the outlying Campagna, encircled by a shining fringe of gold—the suggestive Mediterranean, along whose unruffled and tideless shores many a white-sailed ship was visible.

By the time we had reached Genzano we were just in that state of mind and body proper to the appreciation of a good dinner. Even our poet so far descended from his Parnassian heights as to express the pleasure he felt that our long fast was to be broken.

We were received by a most kind and hospitable host, whose *casa* is the only decent residence within the precincts of Genzano, by name Jacobini, nephew to the late minister of finance. When

the Italians *are* hospitable and cordial, the Red Indians themselves cannot exceed the heartiness of their welcome, the boundlessness of their household generosity. Jacobini's face beamed with genuine delight as he conducted us up long flights of stairs to the *piano-nobile* of his house, near where the swallows build their nests—the modern Italians and the birds having a decided *simpatia* for an elevated situation just under the eaves. The Queen of Sheba was not received by King Solomon, in all his glory, with more *empressement* than we were: the best chambers were opened—the hospitable board spread by an old contadina, wearing a red petticoat edged with green, a green bodice laced with red, bows of the same colour as shoulder knots, a lace apron and tucker, and yards of snow-white dimity stowed away in mysterious folds about her almost hairless head. Great gold earrings and a large brooch completed her attire. Round the room in which our refection was served hung four portraits of lovely girls—one too many for the Graces.

“Ah!” said Jacobini, “those are the pictures of my sisters—*mie care sorelline*. When they were all unmarried we had a happy home. I loved them well; but they are all married now. She with the red rose in her hair, the best, the pret-

tiest, went last—*e adesso son solo!*” and he sighed.

H——ns whispered to me he should like to write a sonnet on that sweet beauty-sister, who never would grow old or faded, either she or the rose in her hair, under their glass frame, whatever the original might do.

S. W—— remarked, what a lovely bust she would make.

But Jacobini looked pained, and changed the conversation, saying—

“*Oh Dio, quanto è combiata adesso, povera mia Rosa tanto amata!*”

But there was no time for sadness; for the soup, or *minestra*, now appeared under the beneficent auspices of the *donna di faccenda*, who, in her red petticoat, skipped about with the agility of a young *ballarina*. Then came a huge bowl of *such* macaroni, with savoury sauce—such macaroni as only Italians know how to prepare; and three dishes of roast and boiled meat, and delicious *frittura*, light and airy as crisp snow on the highest mountains, and piles of savoury *salamè*, and ham and salad, and sweets and fruit—*such* a dinner, which, truth to say, we required not the hospitable pressing of Jacobini largely to

enjoy! Bottle after bottle of wine was produced, the corks flying pell-mell around. This was the *vino sincero* of Genzano, famous for its vineyards—a wine to be drunk in tumblers (like strong sweet cider in taste). Then came sherry and claret, and Heaven knows what other beverages. I began to tremble at last for the heads of Poetry and Sculpture, who were obliged perforce to partake of all, no refusal being permitted by Signor Jacobini, whose broad face grew redder and fuller with every bottle. By the time dinner was over, we were all the most warm and cordial friends that ever sacrificed to Bacchus under the classic shadow of Monte Cavo. We were to remain for a week?—No, we couldn't. For the night?—No, a thousand thanks, it was impossible; the strong walls of Rome would not contain our agonised and expectant families did we not return that night. “*Ma supplico loro, mi facciano la compiacenza, il gran favore,*” &c., &c. Well, we came then to a compromise; we would return and spend another day, and eat another dinner—(small blame to us for the same); so the worthy Jacobini, who had eaten, drunk, and talked like ten ordinary men, was appeased; and we broke up, to view under his chaperonage the classic beauties of the Lake of Nemi, which, like its sister of Albano,

lies so hidden that not a glimpse had we of its existence, although positively *on* its shores. At the top of its straggling street an imposing old palace obtrudes its gloomy heavy front between us and the green woods around, belonging to the Duca Cesarini, an Italian magnifico married to an English lady. Passing along another of those grand leafy avenues, or galleries surrounding Genzano, whose overarching branches formed a long-drawn aisle of that mighty cathedral whose roof is heaven, we reached a gate leading into the recesses of the duchessa's garden.

Elysium itself, I do not believe could be more wondrously fair than were those scented groves encircling the Lake of Nemi. The lake itself opens before us as a secluded, unruffled expanse, five miles in circumference. Its waters are of a peculiarly deep green, reflected from the overshadowing woods, now bursting into the brilliant colours of spring. A more romantic, lonely little tarn, embosomed in silent hills which dimple around it like the leaves of a gigantic lily—the waters its cup-like petal—never opened to human eye. The spirit and worship of the old gods of Greece seem still to cling to these once consecrated groves, and to recall dim visions of those days when the gods loved to descend from high

Olympus to drink the new wines of the vintage, and dally with the fair daughters of earth.

Jacobini—dear, good-natured creature!—neither caring for nor remembering the classicalities, dragged us about to admire fountains flinging waters into marble basins, which flashed back in stars and irises; swans reposing under willows in little emerald islands; and countless camellia trees, whose waxen flowers of red and white blushed forth from thickets of shining leaves. He then led us by long galleries of verdure, formed of laurel, ilex, and other dark and fragrant trees, down towards the lake, through a woody labyrinth of paths.

All at once I missed H——ns, and as I wanted to hear all his lore, I anxiously hunted him out. He was at last discovered seated, book in hand, in a delicious arbour of flowering oleanders. To our question, "What he was reading?" he replied, "Byron, of course;" and then and there repeated these lines, which we heard on the very spot with renewed and particular pleasure:—

"Lo, Nemi! navelled in the wooded hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from its foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake."

Poor Jacobini looked terribly bored at our enthusiasm, to him utterly incomprehensible, and begged some of the party to descend through the winding paths to the edge of the lake. I preferred remaining to hear H——ns discourse upon the many graceful mythological legends which lend such a charm to these now desolate shores.

Opposite to where we sat, sheltered from the heat by an overhanging *berceau*, appeared the very picturesque village of Nemi, half-way up on the hillside. H——ns said that there were near it some vestiges of a temple, supposed to have been dedicated to the Ephesian Diana, to whose worship all the woods bordering the lake were dedicated. Here Diana was worshipped, together with Hippolytus, the unhappy son of Theseus by his first queen. Racine has immortalised his story in noble verse, and Rachel, as Phèdre, has in her turn immortalised Racine by her magnificent acting.

To this temple Iphigenia, with her brother Orestes and his friend Pylades, escaped from Tauris, carrying with them the statue of Diana, which the Delphian Oracle had commanded the wretched Orestes to transport there, so that under the shade of these sacred woods his wearied spirit might find repose.

In these groves the nymph Egeria wandered when death separated her from Numa, her human lover. Inconsolable for his loss, she woke the echoes by her lamentations, and fed the flowers with her tears, until all-merciful Diana, pitying her grief, changed her into a fountain, which still trickles down into the lake near by the village, on the site of "Glorious Diana's fane." Within such groves, and beside such a tranquil lake, Actæon perhaps might have gazed—with that fatal curiosity which cost him so dear—on the fair form of the chaste goddess while she bathed in these placid waters. Here, on clear summer nights, when the amorous breath of Zephyr alone fanned the breeze, and Boreas and his band were deep buried in Ocean's caves, Diana may have awakened Endymion sleeping on the mountain-tops.

* * * * *

Our party being once more assembled, we wandered awhile through shady walks and overhanging woods carpeted with purple violets, and abounding in a peculiar kind of bright blue aster, which contrasted charmingly with the moss-grown ground. It was difficult to tear oneself away from this Arcadian paradise, but on my remarking to Jacobini what a charming place it would be during the summer heats, he quite astonished me by say-

ing it is more than suspected of malaria, and therefore little frequented.

It was with much regret that I left Genzano and the pellucid lake, but the good Jacobini's feelings amounted almost to despair. Again he entreated us to sleep the night, but finding that impossible, contented himself by mounting into the carriage with us, and escorting us on our way. We returned by the same road as far as Ariccia, when he departed, bidding us many times *addio*, *buon viaggio*, and *rivederle*, and bearing from us solemn promises of a speedy return.

Leaving Ariccia, we mounted by an ascending road into the recesses of those great woods which clothe the Lakes of Albano and Nemi and the lower spurs of Monte Cavo. The slanting rays of the sun cast a chequered shade on the ground, covered with every blossom of the spring: violets, yellow daffodils, blue hyacinths dedicated to melancholy and the dead; that anemone, with its dark petals, sprung from the blood of Adonis; and snowdrops, called here "the tears of the Madonna." A gentle wind rustled among the lower shrubs and saplings, and mingled with the murmur of bees busy among gay patches of yellow broom. The singing of birds, particularly that of the nightingale, is never heard to such ad-

vantage as in Italian woods, where, like the *cicale*, they seem literally to warble away their little throats, and kill themselves with sweet songs.

The living rock here and there protruded bare, or covered with emerald mosses and many delicate varieties of fern plants; while overhead waved ancient trees of chestnut, elm, and ilex, twisted into strange shapes, like spirits writhing in the torments of Hades. For about an hour we wound among the mazes of this enchanting wood, and then emerged on the summit of a hill to another phase of all-beauteous Nature. Below opened the Lake of Albano, unruffled, waveless, its precipitous and wooded banks mirrored in the calm waters. Light broke into my soul at the sight of that beautiful lake which I had so long looked for in vain: it came before me like the image of a beloved and long-sought friend. Before us Monte Cavo rose in one long line from its shores; to the left lay Castel Gondolfo, romantically crowning a precipitous cliff embowered in dark woods. The character of the scenery greatly resembles that of the Lake of Nemi, but on a larger scale: the same untroubled waters enclosed in a deep cup-like basin—the same soft harmonious beauty—the same richly-wooded mountains, rising steeply around—the same brilliant colouring, pe-

cular to this "land of many hues"—the same solitude, and mystic repose—the same absence of any living being, house, or sign of life. Beautiful as it is, there is a melancholy, plaintive look about it, eloquently suggestive of happier times. The shores seem heavy with sad memories of other days. Had I not already known the Lake of Albano to be rich in classical traditions—the fabled land whence came the first germ of Rome—I should have guessed from its aspect that the past had there left its indelible imprint, and that the history of those fair, sad shores, which even under the joyous sun look ominous and foreboding, was to be sought in bygone centuries.

This lake lies deep in the crater of an extinct volcano, and its waters bear that dark look peculiar to fluid spontaneously emitted by a convulsion of Nature. Few valleys or ravines break its green sides, which descend in precipitous lines to the margin. There is the monotony of perfect and exquisite beauty, such as one remarks in the classical works of Grecian sculpture, where a slight defect or shortcoming would be almost a relief to the over-taxed eye. An indication of rocks on the opposite shore, slightly basaltic, marks, as H——ns informed us, the site of Alba Longa; for the researches of Sir William Gell have finally

settled that much-disputed question. There, as goes the legend, once stood the palace of a mighty king, who, in punishment for his pride, was destroyed by fire sent from heaven by the gods—a catastrophe supposed to have some obscure connection with the volcanic explosion to which the lake owes its origin. The ruins of his palace are yet pointed out in the dark bosom of the waters, when from long drought they sink below their usual level; and the contadini tell many fearful tales of immense grottoes, arches, and columns; of a whirlpool in the centre, which renders the lake dangerous for boats; and of the spirits of the dead, which still float over the submerged walls which they once inhabited.

Alba Longa, or the “White Long City,” was founded by Ascanius, the son of Æneas, who himself was excluded, like Moses, from the “pleasant land” promised to his followers. Æneas dwelt on the Latin plains, near the shore on which he had landed, on the sandy, barren spot where the white sow had farrowed her thirty young. After Ascanius, surnamed “Iulus,” or the “Soft-haired,” who founded the city by the calm lake which yet nurses in its bosom the ruins of his proud palace, came Numitor and Amulius, who divided the throne; but after a time Amulius

wickedly prevailed over his brother, and commanded his niece Sylvia, who had been born and reared within the new city, to become a priestess of Vesta; but Sylvia forgot her vows, and bore the twins Romulus and Remus, who, to conceal her shame, were borne away into the plain, and consigned to the great river "Father Tiber," which divides the level land of the Campagna. The current bore them to a wild fig tree which grew near the site on which the Forum was afterwards built; and thus Rome came to be founded by the twins, and Alba Longa fell into decay, and was forgotten, until all that now remains is that faint line of dark rock rending the green sward. But the Romans remembered always the old cradle of their race, and therefore they founded the great temple of Jupiter Latialis, whose majestic portico once crowned the summit of Monte Cavo, the highest point on these Alban Hills; and there all the tribes worshipped, looking over the broad lands of ancient Latium.

As we sat among the ilex trees many recollections inspired by the place arose. H——ns reminded us that these wooded heights had afterwards been appropriated to the villas of Pompey and Domitian, traces of whose summer palaces are still distinguishable. We followed a magni-

ficent avenue of ilex trees leading along the upper margin of the lake into the small town of Castel Gondolfo, where the Pope has a villa to which he retires during the summer heats. We walked hurriedly through the small town—a poor and poverty-stricken place, spite of the occasional presence of “the Holy Father”—and descended by a winding, tortuous path to the shore; for H——ns was determined that we should see the Emissary, one of the best preserved and most striking monuments of republican Rome. In vain our “quiet friend” expostulated, for she by no means fancied the climbing. Her voice was lost in the majority; I was for it, and so was Sculpture—three to one—so we carried the day, and down we rapidly descended along a difficult path, escorted by a ragged boy, who amused his leisure time by whooping and screaming in an unintelligible *patois* to his comrades on the opposite shore. After a long and winding descent we rested on the shores of the motionless lake, on an unbroken fringe of the finest turf.

I could have wished to wander for hours on that peaceful shore, populated by thick-coming fancies and poetic memories; but H——ns, now become practical as I had grown fanciful, hurried us on, and we were fain to follow. Vineyards

and fruit-gardens skirted the lake, the latter loaded with the delicate pink and white blossoms of the peach, the almond, and the apricot. The water's edge was strewn with stones, among which we picked up specimens of rare marbles and fragments of terra-cotta, evidences of the palaces once inhabited by Pompey and Domitian. Masses, too, of solid foundations and half-sunken walls ran into the lake terrace-wise, showing that these imperial villas, like the modern water-palaces of Como, stood literally on the water.

A large rock juts into the lake; a great tree bends down over the rock, dipping its dark branches into the waters; and a small door appears in an old wall—a suggestive door, that might lead to Hades, or Lethe, or Purgatory, or any other terrible and unreal place. The custode, a rough shepherd clothed in goats' skins, was there before us, and had opened it. We passed into an enclosed space, walled in with massive-looking Etruscan blocks of stone matted with ivy, and piled above each other as if the Titans had placed them there, and poised them without cement or mortar. This mysterious *nymphæum*, dark and cool even in the hottest day, filled with the sound of rushing waters, must have been the very trysting-place of the nymphs and sylvan

deities. The spirits of the woods and the spirits of the waters, in bygone times, must have met here, and danced many a jocund measure to the sound of reedy pipes. A low arch opposite the entrance, similar in construction to that of the Cloaca Maxima, but infinitely grander and better preserved, spans a rushing, rapid current, clear as crystal, but soon lost under the dark arching recesses beyond. This was the famous Emissary of the Lake of Albano, and dates back to Rome's early history and the siege of Veii, that obstinate neighbour who for ten years disputed her sway.

After the many episodes in which my subject has tempted me to indulge, I will not particularise that well-known siege but only recall the prophecy of the old soothsayer, who during the siege, standing on the walls of the rebellious city, declared in derision to the Romans encamped beneath, as he laughed and mocked at them, "that they might think they would take Veii, but that they never should succeed until the waters of the Lake of Alba were all spent, and flowed out into the sea no more." And when the old man was afterwards captured by stratagem, and conducted to the Roman generals, he repeated the same words; because, he said, it was the Fates

who prompted him to declare what he spoke, and that, "if the waters ran out into the sea, 'woe is Rome!' but that if they be drawn off, and reach the sea no more, then it is 'woe to Veii!'" So, the Romans, unable to comprehend his import sent to consult the Oracle of Delphi, which agreed in all things with the old man's words. The Romans, therefore, who had been much molested at various times by the capricious rising of the waters within the lake, sent workmen, and bored a passage underground through the hills to the other side, where it emerged, and thus made the waters obedient for watering the lands. So the Emissary was built, and Veii fell; and this far misty legend, and ourselves, and the nineteenth century, are linked together by that low arch under which runs the rapid current into which, standing on a few rough logs of wood, we gazed!

There is a popular belief prevailing in this locality, similar to that of the Indians on the sacred Ganges, that little barks made of leaves or sticks, balanced with a lighted taper, bring the fulfilment of any special wish breathed over them in a believing spirit by those who confide them to this subterranean current—provided always that the tapers are not extinguished so long as the barks remain in sight.

I could not conceive why H——ns had so tormented the custode about bringing lights, seeing that the sun shone brightly, and had actually insisted on sending back a *messenger* into the town for a bundle of *moccoletti*. Now his purpose was revealed to me, as also the motive of his active and anxious desire to conduct us to the Emissary, spite of the expostulations of our chaperon, who declared that the passage *down* “naturally suggested,” as Box says to Cox, “how we *ever* should get *up!*” The little barks were soon laden—one for S. W——, another for me, and one for H——ns,—and sent sailing down the gloomy waters which flowed there centuries before Christianity descended on benighted pagans. The deep low vault and the rapid current received and bore them; and we watched their passage, and saw that the voyage promised fair, for the lights illumined the dark sides of the water-paved cavern for a long, long while, then dwindled, and at length disappeared. I wonder on what strange shore those little barks have stranded, and if the good spirits that came down to meet them will hear our prayer. H——ns was immensely anxious about his; but we each kept our own secret, and none knew the other’s wish.

We left this place—the high road, as it were,

into a visionary world—and, as “Pilgrim’s Progress,” says, “addressed ourselves to the ascent”—a labour not easy to accomplish, seeing that the hills are as straight as a house-side, and that, by way of hastening, we chose a path where there was little or no footing. Over stones, and briers, and holes, and rocks we scrambled, sitting down now and then to rest and laugh. At length we reached the summit, breathless and hot, but merry as in the morning when we traversed the Campagna. We gave a look at the Pope’s villa—an ugly, staring place, with a grand view over the lake on one hand, and the broad level expanse of sea and Campagna on the other; then seated ourselves in the carriage and wound down a rapid hill, effectually shutting out the lake and all its charms. A delightful drive through the cool evening air brought us to Rome. We saw the sun set in sheets of gold and saffron over the Mediterranean, the Campagna, and the ruins, in long streaks of glorious light. For a space the very heavens were on fire; then settled down in bars of crimson and deep blood-red. These gradually melted too, and then came pinks, and blues, and purples, reflected on the Sabine Hills, Mount Algidus, ancient Tusculum, and the ruined villas of Cicero, Adrian, and Domitian. Then night—

dark, leaden night—gradually spread her sable mantle around, and the stars came out one by one, and the moon rose, and, lighted by her pale crescent, we passed the overarching ruins by the Lateran. What a pleasant day it had been!

CHAPTER V.

Something about Nuns and Convents—The Quirinale and Pius IX.

I HAD seen a saint made at St. Peter's when I came first to Rome. I have now seen a nun made, and the second ceremony edified me more than the first, because, having deeply studied ecclesiastical Rome, I understood it better. There is a small church on the left hand, descending the hill from the Quattro Fontane towards Santa Maria Maggiore, before whose door we found ourselves at nine o'clock last Sunday morning. Who the tutelary saint of that small church is, no bigger than an "upper chamber," I do not know. Our kind monk, Padre S——, who was waiting to receive us, ushered us in, and placed us close to the altar, which was garlanded, wreathed, and draped with red and white and gold, mixed with flowers and boughs. The floor of the church was also strewn with box and bay leaves, which exhaled an aromatic perfume as the heavy feet of the crowd went and came. We were early: the

altar was untenanted, a crimson desk and cushion being placed in front for the officiating cardinal. There was a great deal of running to and fro; for it seemed a simple, primitive sort of place, unused to such grand and solemn ceremonial. The *custode* (Anglicè, "pew-opener"), a little humpty-dumpty woman, looked all cap and ribbons, bustle and confusion. She, and the Swiss guards in their party-coloured uniforms, standing right and left of the altar, were incessantly at cross-purposes, causing the poor little soul to blush deeper and deeper at each fresh mistake. Then there was a naughty little shred of the garment of Aaron, dressed in a surplice, who dodged about in company with another little priestikin, and caused great scandal by the faces they made from behind the altar at each other—an *inconvenance* instantly and sternly checked by a tall and solemn priest, who, laying violent hands on both, drove them ignominiously forth among the crowd. It was a festa—a great festa—and they wanted to enjoy it their own way: the poor things knew no better.

After the pew-opener had rushed about in and out of the crowd many times, putting chairs in impossible places, where they wouldn't stand, and displaying various evidences of a temporary aber-

ration of intellect, a bell sounded lustily—a buzz and hush went round the crowd—the guards opened a passage—and Cardinal M——, a venerable man entirely clothed in red, advanced and knelt on the cushion prepared for him. He was followed by a suite of gentlemen habited in black, somewhat in the Sir Walter Raleigh style, wearing swords and chains, who, during his orisons, stood around him. After he had risen and taken his place in front of the altar opposite the congregation, two ladies, the Countess M—— and Mrs. S——, wearing veils, advanced, accompanied by priests, and leading by the hand two little children. They took their places on chairs facing the altar. After a pause, and some singing of female voices from behind the altar, four sisters advanced, who, having previously taken the lesser vows, were now to make what is called their profession. They were habited as Sisters of Mercy, wearing black robes, and white linen cloths folded over and about their heads in those indescribable coifs peculiar to nuns. Each bore a lighted candle in her hand. Their eyes were bent on the ground, and they were accompanied by two other elderly sisters, similarly habited, who had already taken the full vows. This solemn procession passed into the enclosure around the altar, each sister

making her reverence to the benevolent-looking cardinal seated on his fald-stool, the rear being brought up by two lovely children, fair and pure as alabaster, habited as little angels, with draperies of blue over tunics of pale pink, sandals on their feet, and wings covered with feathers on their shoulders. These little creatures bore each a salver; one containing wreaths of the brightest and freshest flowers, the other crowns of green thorns, their great dagger-points standing out several inches—thorns that recall those encircling the head of the divine “Man of Sorrow,” so pathetically rendered by Guido and Carlo Dolce.

By the time these various groups had ranged themselves around the altar, the sacred space was quite full. It was a rich and varied tableau; the calm, venerable cardinal in the centre; on one side the six nuns, in their dark habits, bearing, as the wise virgins of old, “their lights burning;” on the other, the group of attendant gentlemen and priests; the little angels in their gay draperies; the veiled ladies and their little charges; with the great crimson velvet curtains framing all in heavy folds. Music now burst forth from a hidden choir in joyous strains befitting the happy celebration of the celestial espousals. The cardinal was invested with splendid robes of white

and gold, and a jewelled mitre was placed on his head. The ladies (secular) then advanced, and, kneeling at his feet, presented the two children, who received at his hands the consecrated oil on their foreheads—a renewal of the baptismal vows, answering to our own ceremony of confirmation. Oil that has been solemnly blessed can only be used in the most solemn rites, such as the coronation of sovereigns, the administration of extreme unction, and other exceptional occasions; and is only to be touched by the hands of a priest. A fillet of white silk was then fastened round the heads of the children, which gave them the appearance of early Christian catechumens. At the conclusion of this graceful preface to the other ceremony, the children, and the two ladies who acted as their sponsors, retired to their seats, and were seen no more.

Music broke the pauses, joyous Hallelujahs and Te Deums and Jubilates; amid which songs of praise, the nuns, advancing, kissed the hand of the cardinal. Their confessor, a tall ill-favoured man, who had entered with them and taken his place by the altar, now rose, and in Italian besought the cardinal to permit him to address a few words of exhortation to his spiritual daughters.

Such an occasion would furnish an admirable

opportunity for a man of eloquence and intellect to make a splendid discourse, but the *padre* here present was a common, coarse creature, who brawled in a high-pitched voice, like a Presbyterian minister, for about twenty minutes, in praise of virginity and of the sacrifice these *coraggiose giovani*, as he styled them, were about to make, and then sat down. The nuns again advanced opposite to the cardinal, and knelt; the little angels, who already looked very faint and weary, drew near; and the ceremony proceeded.

I cannot attempt to give all the particulars of this long and complicated service. I notice the salient points only. One nun, representing her fellows—all of whom bore lighted candles of a size much resembling a torch—made a speech in Italian to the cardinal, to the effect that she and her fellows desired to lay aside all worldly pomp, desires, and vanities, and to attach themselves wholly to that Divine Bridegroom who will one day descend to claim his own. They desired to suffer, to obey, to renounce all and everything, for his sake—father and mother and friends—so as to be found of Him. This was all pronounced in a clear, cheerful voice, without any apparent emotion whatever; in fact, it wanted modulation to make it interesting; and great and noble as was

the sacrifice they were making, it lacked that poetic charm of melancholy and regret with which the imagination invests a nun's vows, separating her from all she loves in the *visible* world, for the sake and love of that *invisible* country—"that bourne from which no traveller returns"—beyond the skies.

At the close of the nun's oration the cardinal addressed certain questions to them all, and I heard them promise "to go wherever they were sent." What a world lay in these simple words—the renunciation of what we love next to life, our liberty—"to go whither they were sent." Poor souls! what a vow, and what fortitude would be required to fulfil it, when we remember that these, being Sisters of Mercy, would be employed in nursing the sick! "To go whither they are sent," into contagion, filth, sorrow, and death—to minister to the wants of the suffering wretch that the world disowns—to receive his last sigh—to close his starting eyes! Oh, holy and sacred vocation, when sincerely fulfilled!

The cardinal then took a large pair of scissors from off the altar, and cut from the head of each a handful of hair, which he presented to them. Receiving the hair from him, they cast it from them with these words, pronounced in clear, round,

unhesitating accents: "*Rinunzio al mondo e a tutte le sue vanità.*" There was almost *hate* and *defiance* in the tone and the action, as though the thought of this world was sin, and pain, and sorrow; but no one present could for a moment question its entire sincerity—it was the free, spontaneous expression of the internal essence. The cardinal then addressed them in Italian.

"*Mie sorelle,*" said he, "you have chosen, like Mary, the 'better part;' you will be the brides of that unseen and eternal Bridegroom whose coming the Church militant earnestly awaits. Will you, like Him, choose the crown of thorns, or will you prefer the chaplet of flowers? Here are both. I desire that you make your choice."

The little angels now advanced, bearing each their salver.

"*Eminentissimo,*" replied the nun who had all along acted as spokeswoman, "we only wish in all things to follow the example of our Divine Lord; we beseech the blessed Virgin, *Maria Santissima*, and all the saints to help us in this our resolve. Like Jesus, we desire to wear the crown of thorns, which we now take."

Each advanced, and taking a crown of thorns from off the salver, two elder sisters fixed it on the top of their white coifs. Bearing these marks

of our Saviour's agony, they had accomplished the symbolic rites of the Church, and had become eternally dedicated to Him in time as in eternity. They kissed the hand of the cardinal, then tenderly saluted each other; and, after listening to some more joyous music from the invisible choir in celebration of the mystic espousals, they withdrew as they had come. I could see them well as they passed out. Some were strikingly handsome, young, with grand massive features, and deep, dark, glancing eyes, only to be seen in the South—profound, fathomless, glorious, as the depths of their own blue heavens! Peace go with the holy maids, and joy in the great vineyard of the Lord, whither they were bound; and may they never repent those solemn oaths, chronicled by the Church in our hearing!

"*Ahi, poverine!*" exclaimed that excellent creature, Padre S——, when all was over. "*Dio li protegge!* What a life—what sacrifices! *Ah, chi lo sa!*" And his honest eyes ran over with tears, for he—a monk of Valombrosa—*knew* what it was to take up that Cross here below, and wreath it with flowers of humility and resignation, when it is most heavy and most bitter.

The church of San Antonio, on the Esquiline, is known to every one as the place where the

animals are blessed. It is also well known to Romans as the convent where are manufactured the palms used by the Pope and cardinals in the high mass at St. Peter's on Palm Sunday. This year no less than twelve hundred were woven out of the *canne*, or reeds (growing in waving forests on the banks of rivers and in marshy places), by the industrious nuns, who, living under what is called *clausura*, can never leave their monastery like the free, but certainly more heroic, "Sisters of Mercy."

Padre S—— took us to see the great palm made for the Pope, and sent to him every year from San Antonio. He, poor man, was in ecstasy over its elegance and fancy. If it had been a rare *cinq-ue-cento* toy worked by the hand of the immortal Cellini, he could not have more extolled it. It certainly was wonderful how the conceits and fancies of grapes, and wheat-ears, and leaves, and flowers, could all be cut out of hard round reeds; but the design was poor and confused, and the introduction of artificial flowers into the festoons gave the whole a tawdry appearance. It was a huge thing, nearly six feet high.

But what engaged me much more than the palm was a sight we saw in the interior of the cloister, whither, thanks to our tonsured friend

(who is the confessor of these good sisters), we had penetrated. There was a small table immediately below a heavy double-iron grating, shaped like a window in the wall. At this table sat an elderly man of the working class and a boy. Behind the grating, and distinctly visible, was a real "cloistered nun," conversing with these her relatives, and all the while busily plying her fingers in weaving, and cutting, and twisting a palm for the coming festa. Her figure and head were wrapped in a mantle of black serge; her face was enclosed in a close-setting coif. She was young and positively beautiful. Fresh roses mantled in her cheeks, and her eyes quite pierced the envious bars. She looked gay, smiling, and happy, and was conversing on evidently cheerful and animating subjects in a low voice with her relatives. I could scarcely take my eyes from her—she seemed positively to irradiate the gloomy precincts around her. Padre S—— informed me that nuns are at all times permitted thus to meet and freely converse with friends and relatives.

"But," said I, "should they *abuse* the indulgence, what then?"

"Oh!" said he, "that rarely occurs; but in such a case the abbess would interfere and ad-

monish the sister. Would you like to see the mother-superior?"

"Oh, extremely!"

"Well, you shall see her; for she is *una buonissima creatura e molto mia amica*."

So we passed into an inner room, and sat down before precisely such another little table, under just such a double grating. As Padre S—— passed the lovely nun, she respectfully rose and saluted him. This attention was shown by virtue of his office of confessor to the community. After waiting some time, a little old wrinkled woman, bent nearly double by age, emerged from the dark recesses beyond, like some fairy of the good old days. Her countenance, though extremely aged, expressed mildness and amiability. She saluted us kindly, and seemed quite delighted at our praises of the Pope's great palm.

"Si," replied she, "*un bel lavoro molto bravo*."

We had not many subjects in common, especially as the good old lady declined to consider us *Christians*; but we got on very tolerably notwithstanding. She looked at our children and asked their ages, and admired them—until, quite ashamed of martyring her any longer, I begged to *levarle l'incomodo* (as the Romans say), and

withdrew. Certainly my impression of the nuns of San Antonio is that they are cheerful, happy, and in the enjoyment of all becoming freedom.

Many of the boasted hills of Rome exist but in name, or in the excited imaginations of antiquarians; but the Quirinale is really a respectable and visible eminence, conspicuous from all quarters of the city. Baths and temples decorated its base. A temple to the Fidius Deus (or of good faith) is particularly mentioned—a deity with a horn—with whom, assuredly, the Romans had very small dealings. On the summit, near the site of the very magnificent but small church of St. Andrew, belonging to the Jesuits, rose the stately temple of Quirinus, dedicated to Romulus. When that unprincipled, though fortunate, founder of young Rome had established his brigand dominion over a motley collection of exiles, refugees, thieves, and murderers, gathered by promises of refuge, and certainty of warlike spoils from all parts of Italy, he suddenly, after a long and prosperous reign, disappeared from the presence of the multitude during an assembly of the people without the city. The heavens darkened, clouds gathered over his throne, a blackness as of night obscured the day, and thunder and loud winds burst forth, as if announcing some tremendous convulsion of

Nature. When the tempest passed and the light reappeared, Romulus was gone.

The people declared that he had been murdered, but the priests and patricians maintained that he was caught up to heaven, and that it behoved the quirites and plebs to worship him as a god. The question was satisfactorily settled by the credulity or ingenuity of a certain Alban, Julius Proculus by name, descended from Ascanius, the founder of the "Long White City," who affirmed that on his way to the Forum, Romulus had met him, ennobled and dazzling in countenance, and arrayed in radiant armour. Julius astonished at the apparition, thus addressed it: "For what misbehaviour of ours, O king! or by what accident have you so untimely left us in utter calamity, and sunk the whole city in inexpressible sorrow?" To which the shade graciously replied, "It pleased the gods, my good Proculus, that for awhile I should dwell with men and found a great and glorious city, and afterwards return to the heavens from whence I came. Farewell. Go tell the Romans that by the exercise of temperance and fortitude they shall attain the highest pitch of human greatness, and I, the god Quirinus, will ever be propitious to them."

Thus spoke the unrighteous murderer of his

brother, and disappeared. So a temple was built, and the royal impostor Romulus was deified and honoured under the name of *Quirites*, as a martial or warrior god; and the hill was called Quirinus on which his temple stood, and is so named even to this day.

On the summit of the height appears the magnificent fountain of Monte Cavallo, so named from the horses and their god-like leaders, Castor and Pollux. The names of Phidias and Praxiteles are engraven on the pedestals, and antiquarians agree that they are of Grecian workmanship. Their exquisite classical beauty is, at all events, beyond dispute. Between them rises an obelisk of red granite, brought from the mausoleum of Augustus, where it had been placed to commemorate some Egyptian triumph of Rome's first emperor. That obelisk, bathed in the sunlight, carries back one's mind to the burning sand-deserts bordering the Nile, and to gigantic temples and mysterious rites of which Herodotus himself could not write without trembling. Now its base is bathed by a pure and delicious fountain. Beyond are churches and edifices bordering the ample piazza. In one corner we catch a glimpse of the Rospigliosi Palace, embowered in trees; opposite rise the walls of the Colonna Gardens,



overmantling with verdure and loading the air with the perfume of roses and orange groves, under whose shade the Papal cavalry are wont to meet, groom their horses, sing martial songs, and swear "in very choice Italian" as unconcernedly as if the ground they stood on was not consecrated by world-wide legends of the classic past.

On the opposite side, facing the fountain, extends the vast palace of the Quirinale,* crowning the hill like a diadem, and descending through whole streets in its interminable length. It impresses the imagination from the very simplicity of its architecture, so essentially different from the florid magnificence prevailing at the Vatican. It was at the Quirinale, built by Paul III. and Gregory XIII., that the conclaves of the Sacred College always assembled; and at that window which one sees conspicuous over the grand entrance the new Pope was presented to the Roman people. A place renowned as the scene where the ancient Romans worshipped the temporal power of their deified king, and the Catholic world for ages received its chief, must demand from me some few details.

When the Pope is dead, the cardinal-chamber-

* Now the palace of the King of United Italy.

lain knocks three times at the door of his chamber, calling on him by his Christian and family name, and his title as Pope. After a pause he turns to the attendant clergy and notaries, saying, "*Dunque è morto.*" The fisherman's ring is taken from his finger and broken in pieces; the great bell of the Capitol tolls, and the bells of every one of the innumerable churches in Rome respond to its deep and solemn note. The Sacred College of Cardinals meanwhile assembles, whilst the body of the deceased pontiff is exposed to the sight of the people who come and kiss his feet.

On the ninth day the cardinals meet in the Quirinale chapel, where the psalm, "Veni, Creator," is sung. The immense extent of the palace on this side, running down the Via Pia to the Quattro Fontane, is entirely divided into little suites of chambers, inhabited only on these solemn occasions, when, in order to prevent any possibility of communication from without during the sitting of the conclave, the cardinals are confined there until after the election of a new pope. Each room contains a bed, a few chairs, and a table. The cardinal princes once installed in these dismal little cells, which are hung with green serge, the doors of the palace are walled up, as are also the windows, except one pane, just suf-

ficient to admit a gloomy light into the conclave.

The Prince of Savelli, by virtue of an hereditary privilege, keeps the gates, and provisions are conveyed to the cardinals and their attendants by means of revolving circular cupboards, such as one sees used in convents. There are confessors, doctors, surgeons, two barbers, and a carpenter, also shut up. The cardinals rise at six o'clock, when a bell rings, and a voice is heard in the long corridors calling out, "*Ad capellam Domini.*"

The election, which takes place in the chapel, is by ballot; the great powers of Catholic Europe having each the power of a single veto against any single cardinal, but no more. When the number of votes makes it evident who will be elected, a bell sounds, and the name of the chosen cardinal is pronounced aloud. He is then asked if he accepts the election, on responding to which demand in the affirmative (for history informs us of no pontiff who ever refused the proffered honour), the cardinals fall back respectfully, leaving him alone. He then announces by what appellation he intends to reign, it having been the custom for the popes to change their names at their election ever since the time of

Sergius IV., who, being christened *Peter*, declined to bear the name given by Christ to the first among the Apostles. The new Pope is then arrayed in white and crimson, red embroidered shoes bearing the cross are put on his feet, the cardinals kiss the cross, and he is invested with the fisherman's ring.

The "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus" is then sung by the fine Papal choir, unaccompanied by instrumental music, and the cardinal-deacon, preceded by a mason, a carpenter, and the master of the ceremonies, proceeds to the window in the Loggia over the grand entrance to announce to the people the election of the Pope.

An immense multitude fills the piazza. The windows, the roofs are one moving mass of human beings, ebbing and flowing like the stormy waves of an angry sea. All Rome is there, the plebeian and the patrician, brought together by one common sentiment of intense curiosity. Cries and screams announce the excitable nature of the fiery Italians. They can brook no delay—the cardinal is too long in coming—the carpenter is a *birbante*, and they curse the mason, and send him to the infernal gods of both ancient and modern Erebus for his laziness. "*Ci vuol il nostro Papa. Facci vedere il nostro Papa!*" "We must see him! Give

us our Pope!" thunders on all sides. The smaller *canaille* mount sacrilegiously on the beauteous statues of Castor and Pollux, bestride the Grecian steeds without ceremony, and fling around the water from the basin on the crowd who cannot escape, crying out to be shown their Pope. The guards, in this moment of interregnum, are of no avail; they are mocked at and disregarded. They, too, end by joining in the cry of "*Il Papa—il nuovo Papa!*" It is a moment of thrilling interest, of dramatic suspense. Suddenly there is a great pause. A silence, a stillness as of death, falls on that assembled multitude. The wall of brick that built up the window totters, falls with a crash, the cardinal-deacon stands forth on the Loggia, and the soft music of the choir is heard in the distance. At the sight of the cardinal there is a hush. The crowd trembles, rushes forward, and then again is still. A religious silence reigns.

"I announce to you," says his Eminence, "joyful tidings; the Most Eminent and Reverend Cardinal N——, having taken the name of ——, is elected Pope."

The piazza resounds with enthusiastic roars, shouts, and cries of delight and triumph; the silver trumpets sound clear and pure above the riot; the great guns of Castel San Angelo bang

forth their iron bolts; and every fort in Rome unites in chorus with the deep harmonious sound of the great bell of St. Peter's, and the bells of every other church in the city.

In the midst of this exulting jubilee, when earth calls on the mighty echoes of the mountains and the high vault of heaven to respond to and participate in its joy, the father of the Catholic world himself appears on the balcony, and indulges the enthusiasm of a delirious people by his presence. When Pius IX. was elected, his tender heart was so overcome by these overwhelming greetings, that he actually burst into a flood of tears, and was removed fainting from the Loggia. But the people have not yet done. After the Pope withdraws, they rush forward, and, by virtue of an ancient privilege, proceed to the interior of the palace where the conclave sat, seize on everything they can find as their lawful booty, until the illumination of the city calls off the uproarious rabble to a wider arena wherein to *sfogare* their boiling passions.

It was from this historic window that Pius IX. was in the habit of showing himself to the enthusiastic Romans at the period of his wild popularity, when they called him forth to heap blessings on his head, to applaud and cheer him

for the boon of liberty his government insured them. Here he received all the ovations which an excited and grateful nation are capable of rendering. Sometimes he was called forth in rain and wind, and came, obedient to their wishes, to gratify them by his presence, and dispense blessings around—blessings of price, coming from a good and a Christian man who lives near his God. Those two short years saw many thrilling scenes of love, devotion, and enthusiasm, many gorgeous pageants, many soul-inspiring services, when the temporal and spiritual powers invested in the beloved Pope seemed to render him more than mortal in the eyes of his people. But the dark days came; the chord was too tightly drawn—it needs must slacken. The excellent and saintly man, in his simple-hearted goodness, granted weighty reforms too rapidly and readily. The excited people, finding they had but to ask, grew senseless and unreasonable, and desired that Pius should head a red republic—a moral chaos. The fickle population, accustomed to action and excitement, could brook no repose—pageants and sights must amuse them, laws be destroyed, and new concessions keep their minds on fire. The Pope, unconscious of the gulf opening beneath him, confident in his people's affection and his

own justice and rectitude, for a time headed the course of events, flung himself in the rushing tide of the changing time, and endeavoured to please every party by his compliance. But it would not do; he could not conscientiously, and he would not wrongfully, answer the expectations of a licentious and now brutalised populace. He would have secured their freedom, but they yelled for anarchy. The wild flames of revolution of the tremendous '48 were abroad, and soon reached the walls of the ancient queen of cities.

The people, finding that, *reformer* though he was, Pius would never become a *revolutionist*, came to hate their idol, and sought to tear him down from the household altars which they had reared to him. Then came the senseless and cruel murder of Count Rossi at the Palazzo della Cancelleria—that patriotic and enlightened minister who was the temporal support of the Papal throne. Then came rumours of war and danger and rebellion. The same people who had once so loved him, now gazed at the Pope in stern and ominous silence. Then came the attack on the Quirinale, where he lived—the brutal attack on the sovereign who would have spent himself for the people God had placed him to rule over. Then he was no longer safe in once happy Rome;

for a republic was to be established, and, save the Swiss guard—faithful as steel—he was alone and undefended. Then came the flight. Then he passed out of the great portal (where first he had been saluted by the unstable Romans) disguised as a priest, and accompanied by the Bavarian ambassador—Count Spaur—and fled over the frontiers to Mola di Gaeta, where he was received by the King of Naples, and lived many long months in a kind of splendid captivity.

Another pope, years ago, was dragged from the Quirinale, which would seem fatal to the Papal power, by a different, though not less brutal, act of violence, when General Radet, the envoy of Napoleon, scaled the garden walls at the head of a band of soldiers, and at three o'clock in the morning forced his way into the sleeping-room of the venerable Pius VII. They obliged him to rise, dress, and accompany them, with his faithful minister, Cardinal Pacca, to a carriage in waiting, and thus in the silence of the night bore off the Pope a prisoner. After driving some time towards Florence, the Pope asked Cardinal Pacca if he had brought with him any money. Your Holiness knows," said he, "I was dragged out of my apartment as you were from yours, and had no opportunity of taking anything." On search-

ing their purses they found nothing but a few *bajocchi* (pence). "See," exclaimed Pius VII., "all that remains to me of my kingdom!"

I have been led to greater length than I had intended in recounting the vicissitudes recalled by the Quirinale; and I must now relate my own impressions when I yesterday visited that interesting palace. I entered by the portal under that same historic window in the front of the palace. An enormous *cortile* occupies the centre of the building, surrounded by a fine arcade, from which grand marble staircases ascend. This *cortile* was as public as the streets when the Pope inhabited the palace; and although the party-coloured Swiss guard used ostentatiously to parade up and down, bearing their halberds, all the dirty little boys of the quarter found a convenient play-ground in the cool shade of the pillared corridors. The *bocchi* balls rolled; and that everlasting game with their fingers, "*Uno, duè, trè*," which the Italians do really seem to understand from the very hour of their birth, proceeded unmolested. Now and then, when a cardinal or a monsignore appeared, they would stare, stand aside, and then begin again, nothing abashed.

On mounting a fine staircase, we entered a nobly-proportioned hall richly decorated with

frescoes, from whence opens the chapel where the conclave for the election of the popes is held, and where the dove is said to descend on the head of the elected cardinal. These mysterious precincts, however, are not visible to strangers. Three ante-rooms lined with beautiful marbles are next passed, ending in a kind of corridor lighted by a spacious window looking out to the front of the palace. This is the window so celebrated in Papal history as the scene of such varied events, and which, during the sitting of the conclave, is walled up. Beyond is a splendid apartment lined with fine Gobelin tapestry representing subjects from our Saviour's life, and opening into a still grander hall, furnished in a similar manner, but more resplendent with gold and coloured marbles, where, under a canopy of crimson velvet, the popes gave audience to crowned heads and magnates of the highest rank. The chairs are of wood, and without cushions, as no one, of whatever rank, is permitted a more comfortable seat while in the presence of his Holiness, who is, however, himself accommodated with a most luxurious *poltrona* (literally an idle-chair). Conspicuous in every room are placed one if not two superbly-carved crucifixes of gold, ebony, ivory, and precious

gems—striking mementoes in these gilded saloons. Next in order comes another audience-room of smaller dimensions, but still superb; and so on and on to a snug little boudoir, or writing-room, where the Pope's arm-chair is still prepared under a velvet canopy, before a table on which stands a large crucifix. Shelves surround the room curtained with crimson silk; that colour also prevailing in the Pope's bedroom—a nice quiet little room, where the Vicar of Christ upon earth lays him down to rest on a small brass bedstead, screened with curtains of red silk. Two or three diminutive chests of drawers, a sofa, and a few chairs constitute all the furniture. A *bénitier* for holy water hangs against the wall. A *prie-dieu* desk for private devotion, and some crucifixes and religious ornaments, complete the arrangements of the room. It may not be generally known that Pius began life as a soldier, and belonged for many years to the Guardia Nobile, whose especial province it is to guard the person of the pontiff, whom they never quit day or night, but sleep outside the door of his chamber. The late Pope, Gregory, perceiving his vocation for a religious life, advised Pius to renounce the military career, which he accordingly did, and was ordained a priest, taking part soon after in a missionary ex-

pedition to South America. Perhaps few modern popes have known so much of real practical work as Pius. I have before mentioned the charming and benignant expression of his countenance. His features are good, and although beaming with unmistakable kindness, convey nothing vulgar or trivial. It is a fine, solid-looking head, with grey hair cut *à la Titus*. In his busts, otherwise remarkably like him, one misses the placid and affectionate expression of his black eyes, which diffuse a calm peacefulness that must be felt even by those most inclined to dispute his influence. In manner he is kind, though quiet and reserved. He rises at half-past six in the morning, and, which is extraordinary in an Italian, shaves himself; for he dislikes unnecessary attendance. His toilet over, he says mass alone in his private chapel, and hears another in public afterwards. This is to Pius the most solemn and important act of his life. At half-past eight he has fulfilled his pontifical duties and fortified his soul by prayer and communion. His mind is now free and disengaged for the labours of the day. A light breakfast of coffee and a few biscuits follows, according to the Italian fashion, and then begin his various avocations—Maestri di Camera, Camerieri Segreti, ministers of state, cardinals, prefects,

and ambassadors now crowd the ante-chambers, and are received by him without distinction.

In many of the saloons there are good pictures, principally of the Decadence; but I was particularly struck by the principal chapel, painted entirely in fresco by Guido and Albano. It is quite a little *bijou*—so fresh and glowing, one might fancy the colours but of yesterday. A large altar-piece of the Annunciation is, to my thinking, one of the most perfect and exquisite works of Guido, although Rome boasts such matchless and numerous specimens of his skill.

After passing these suites of rooms we reached the Pope's dining-room—a quiet, unadorned apartment, where he eats alone under the eternal *bal-dacchino*, with a crucifix placed opposite. Ever since the too worldly repasts of Leo X. it has been etiquette for the popes to dine alone, in the most simple and frugal manner. It is the highest honour for reigning sovereigns to be admitted to the Papal table, and one rarely accorded. At Castello, or elsewhere, during the *villeggiatura*, when etiquette is somewhat relaxed, a few cardinals and prelates are sometimes, but rarely, invited. Pius's dinner is said to cost only one *scudo* (about five shillings), and to be discussed in twenty minutes, during which short time he con-

verses with the secretary of state. After dinner, like a true Italian, he retires to his room and takes a short siesta. Then he drives out, and when without the walls alights to walk on the public road.

The windows of the Quirinale overlook delicious gardens which slope down the steep sides of Monte Cavallo, and are divided into stately terraces by high clipped hedges of yew and evergreen oak, bordered by statues and Termini. Bright fountains, *jets d'eau*, and parterres of flowers enliven the centre of each division. Under these dark cypress groves and ilex trees a perpetual coolness reigns; massive sculptured balustrades edge the hill, and long flights of marble steps descend to sequestered shrubberies below, whence winding paths conduct to cascades gushing from rocky banks—an elegant, though somewhat gloomy, plaisance, well adapted to the tonsured grandees for whose enjoyment it was designed.

CHAPTER VI.

The Holy Week—The "Miserere"—The Lavandaia—The Cena—The Sepulchre—Castel Fusano—Ostia—Modern Readings of Virgil.

THE ceremonies of the Holy Week occupy every day, and every night too, I verily believe, during the entire week. How the priests live through it all, working and fasting, is an enigma; but they manage to survive, and come out at Easter as rosy and plump as ever. The Sistine Chapel, where the "Tenebræ" and "Miserere" are performed on the two days preceding Good Friday, is besieged by thousands of infatuated females for hours before the services begin, all struggling to obtain a front position on the forms placed behind the screen in the lower half of the chapel, which (as this, the private oratory of the Pope, is supposed to be inaccessible to women) are pushed back as far as possible.

I, for my part, took the whole affair with great composure, and walked quietly up the Sala Regia about four o'clock. The ascent was beset with

Swiss guards, their brilliant uniforms and glancing steel accoutrements looking exceedingly picturesque and mediæval; hundreds of ladies in black, gentlemen in evening dress, and militia and military heroes in full uniform trooped up this truly magnificent and regal entrance to the countless splendours of the Vatican, all laughing, talking, and joking with quite praiseworthy forgetfulness of the solemn nature of the anniversary. Some ladies tried to smuggle in camp-stools under their petticoats—a *ruse* instantly detected and ruthlessly exposed by the all-seeing officials; while others coming in greater numbers than their tickets allowed, were remorselessly sent back, spite of lamentations and reproaches in unmistakably Anglican-Italian.

It was a scene of confusion, irreverence, and frivolity; men pushing onwards, and recklessly separating groups of terrified ladies; guards pouncing on delinquents; and bold mammas dragging their staring daughters past quiet foreigners—Catholics, of course—who looked round all aghast at their irreverent haste and thoroughly English rudeness.

Arrived at the Sala Regia—at the summit of the stairs from whence both the Sistine and Pauline Chapels open—the scene grew ten times

wilder. That lofty hall, so nobly proportioned, the walls glittering with frescoes and gilding, and adorned with clustered branches of magnificent candelabra—where on ordinary occasions unbroken silence reigns, and the very odour of sanctity floats around—a spot of reverent waiting and awful expectation, whether to the Catholic about to visit the shrine sanctified by the constant presence of Christ's vicar, or to the artistic devotee viewing for the first time the immortal works of Michel Angelo and his predecessors—that majestic and suggestive hall which, as I write, rises before me in all its pomp, shaded by a chastened light, half concealing, half displaying the great frescoes and the mysterious doors, some veiled by falling curtains, others opening into endless corridors and galleries, is now, alas! desecrated into a street thoroughfare!

Thousands of men and women, gathered from the four quarters of the globe, are rushing about, crowding every space, treading on each other's heels, talking, wondering, pushing; every face turned towards the open door, with its ample drapery of crimson, leading into the Sistine Chapel, which they are all firmly resolved to enter at all risks. And though that door is guarded by military—obstinate Swiss guards, who, if Venus

herself fresh from Olympus, or all the Circes and Armidas that ever existed in fact or fable, tried to cajole, would not budge one single inch—still, so vast is the crowd, its own weight carrying it irresistibly onward, that all slowly disappear under the overhanging curtain.

Every one knows that the Sistine Chapel is not large. Imagine, then, what it must be when, in the space assigned to the public—in which five hundred might commodiously sit—ten thousand persons are, by some miracle of crushing, collected. Imagine the heat, the squeezing, the elbows poked into one's sides, the furious glances, the hatred, malice, and uncharitableness of all those living beings, each wanting to see and to hear; and all, save a few in the front, effectually prevented from doing either, and furiously incensed in consequence. I doubt if the pagan audience collected in the Flavian Amphitheatre to see men torn by wild beasts could be more savage. For myself, I, symbolically speaking, gave up the ghost in terror and dismay, but by good luck getting pushed against the side of the ladies' box, I carefully kept my place, and tried to collect my senses. This box, or enclosure, was as full as stuffing could make it, and the heat excessive. At the entrance, one of the Papal camerieri, dressed

in doublet, hose, and high Elizabethan ruff, kept up a show of order. Still more ladies would keep crowding in, despite his remonstrances.

"Le prego, le supplico, signora; di non montare, non c'è posto, è pieno."

"Mais," says some English mamma with two lean daughters, *"vous pouvez faire un po di place je suis sûre pour questa signora,"* pushing forward first one, then the other daughter.

"No, madama," replies the cameriere angrily; *"impossibile."*

"Mais, moussu," says a fat old lady, who has been perseveringly elbowing her way upwards, and has, spite of all opposition, firmly planted her foot on the prohibited steps, *"je vois une place—un posto, là, là—let me go!"* And she makes a dash forwards.

"No, signora," again replies the cameriere, placing his arm across the opening, which the belligerent lady disregarding, pushes madly aside; and a struggle—yes, actually a struggle begins, ending in the signal defeat and consequent retreat of the fat lady, who is violently landed on the ground, looking extremely red and furious; the cameriere, excited and scarlet also, exclaiming in a low voice, *"Ma, corpo di Bacco! must I then call in the carabinieri against these Inglesi?"*

Neither the Pope nor the cardinals were visible. The Gregorian chant, in which the Psalms are sung, had begun, and the lights, fixed on a triangular stand near the altar, were burning. This stand, typical of the Trinity, holds fifteen lights, one of which is extinguished at the conclusion of each psalm. This usage is explained by some as symbolising the prophets, who were persecuted and successively put to death before the coming of the Saviour; others represent it as signifying the abandonment and desertion He suffered from all his disciples in his last hours. The last light is not extinguished, but withdrawn behind the altar, in allusion to the Saviour's entombment and subsequent resurrection; the "Tenebræ" being an office of mourning commemorating the death of the Redeemer, while its triple celebration is in allusion to the three days during which his body remained in the tomb. The music is entirely vocal, and intensely monotonous; for, by some unexplained etiquette, the organ is never heard in the presence of the Holy Father. No pomp, no gorgeous spectacle can compensate for the absence of that thrilling, overwhelming burst that carries the soul upwards in a rushing torrent of delicious harmony. St. Cecilia is said to have invented the

organ in a moment of ecstatic inspiration. It is a pretty legend, and fitly symbolises the heavenly influence of that noble instrument. But to return. Suffocated, cramped, and confused, it seemed to me the Psalms would never end. Impatience became general, and everybody around was perpetually popping up and down to see how many lights remained. "Now there's only two left," I heard. "Now there is only one!" As the moment approached for the commencement of the "Miserere," the excitement increased tenfold. Fresh crowds pushed in through the door, determined, *coûte que coûte*, to storm the barriers of half-fainting women. Some retreated; some were borne out insensible, the guards coming to their rescue; others firmly stood their ground. Again the fight began with the old ladies and the chamberlain, and again he victoriously repulsed their assault. All the lights had disappeared; evening was darkening into night; the chapel lay wrapped in a dim, subdued twilight, the audience massed into grey and black shadows: the glorious roof, painted by Michel Angelo, became indistinct and misty..... It was an hour of solemn communing and awful contemplation, met, as we seemed, on the threshold of the tomb to celebrate the cruel abandonment of the Divine One, surrounded

by typical darkness and lamentations, prefiguring the agony of his soul, when the bitter cry was wrung from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

After a brief pause the first long-drawn notes of the "Miserere" echoed through the gloom—soft, unearthly, spiritual—sounds as of celestial souls suffering the torments of the damned, and calling on heaven and earth to listen while they breathed forth their agony. Now a high note struck on the ear, thrilling in its acuteness—a note suggestive of corporeal suffering from an incorporeal being. As it died away, other voices took up the wailing strain, breaking off like the first in vague, melancholy sighs. Then came a convulsive thrill, a quivering shake in the sad minor key in which the whole is sung, followed by a few notes of delicious cadence, rich and flowing, as if a glimpse of heaven—an angel visit—had for a moment broken the spell of torture. Brief respite! Again sounds the same piercing cry, and again it floats away into unutterable voiceless chaos. As the sad strains swelled in tearful modulations, the shadows deepened, and night came to shroud, as it were, and bear them in her sable bosom to the realms above, where angels wept as they listened, and all the glory of heaven

grew dim at the remembrance of the Saviour's agonies.

Still, spite of the touching and profoundly devotional character of the "Miserere," the unaccompanied music becomes after a while tedious and monotonous. On the whole, I was disappointed; and I decidedly consider the effect more singular than beautiful. When all was over came the dreadful crush to get out—the cruel, irreverent crush—as dangerous as it was intolerable. I, for my part, was completely lifted off my feet, and found myself flung violently down into the centre of the Sala Regia, where by good luck, I landed safely. The hall was exactly like the crush-room of an opera, for the Protestant mob, as eager to get out as they had been to get in, forgot all decency in their haste. Shame on their irreverent curiosity and stolid indifference!

To-day, Thursday, although occurring in the midst of the profoundest mourning, is considered by Catholics a devotional festa of joyous solemnity, as being the day on which our Lord instituted the Eucharist. Mass is celebrated in the Sistine Chapel. The Pope afterwards passing in grand procession through the Sala Regia, bears the host to the Pauline Chapel, and places it on what is called "the Sepulchre"—namely, the altar, which

on this occasion symbolises the sacred tomb. In the afternoon all the world throngs to St. Peter's to see the Lavandaia, which is arranged in this wise. Along one side of the transept, terminating in the chapel of SS. Processio e Martino (the gaolers of SS. Peter and Paul, who were converted by the Apostles during their imprisonment in the Mamertine prisons), on a high platform, were placed thirteen men—pilgrims, I believe—dressed in the most curiously antique costume imaginable, looking in the far distance exactly like a group of Giovanni Bellini or Francia, or some other of the early masters. They were all in white, with high conical caps, and at their back was suspended a magnificent piece of tapestry representing the "Last Supper" of Leonardo de Vinci. Why there should be thirteen apostles I cannot explain, but I can certify to the number.

After being pushed about for some time in the crowd, a general buzz, turning of heads, clashing of arms, and echoing of heavy steps along the marble floor announced the arrival of his Holiness. His throne was erected upon the altar of the adjacent chapel; and here Pius, after a short delay, appeared on a level with the mysterious apostles, who really outdid "patience on a monument" in rigid immovability. Vocal music burst

forth from a hidden choir, his Holiness the while laying aside his outer vestments, and being girded by an attendant cardinal with a linen apron. He then moved towards the apostles, followed by the dignitaries of his court, while one of the cardinals chanted from the Gospel of St. John the passage describing the act of our Saviour's humility now to be commemorated. The ceremony of washing the apostles' feet occupies but a very short time. The Pope lightly touches them with a towel (after the attendant deacon had poured water on them), then stoops and kisses them; after which each apostle is presented with a nosegay.

As soon as the English ladies have seen one foot washed, they rush off like demoniacs towards the Sala Regia in the Vatican, to secure places for the Cena, which immediately follows; those who witness both being considered to have achieved a real feat of generalship. When the *Lavandaia* was over, the Pope disappeared, and I made my way along with the vast crowd into the mighty vestibule and up the Sala Regia. A more quiet, polite crowd I never beheld—all being anxious to proceed, yet none doing so at the expense of his neighbour; a silent seriousness was expressed in every face; they remembered they

were in a church, and that we had all met there to celebrate the symbolical representation of a Christian mystery. All honour to the Catholic crowd after the painful exhibition of the Sistine Chapel! When I reached the Sala Regia and rejoined the foreigners, the Babel-like confusion recommenced. Here thousands were struggling and disputing, and rushing to and fro like mad. The immense hall where the Cena is laid out was crammed to suffocation. There were the black-veiled ladies in enclosed seats; and in their train the same noise, folly, and irreverence as on the preceding day; Swiss guards trying to keep the peace, and signally failing in the endeavour; distressed camerieri and bumptious old ladies. I found favour in the eyes of an old sergeant of the Swiss guard by addressing him in German: he forthwith took me under his wing, and led me on until I was placed close to the bar separating the audience from the space appropriated to the Cena. Here I saw capitally. A long table was spread with fruit and sweets, and elegantly decorated with high vases of flowers, superb pieces of plate, and thirteen statuettes of the apostles. Around sat the mediæval gentlemen, who by some miracle seemed to have been removed from the basilica below and placed here. The Pope, simply

dressed in white, his benignant face beaming with that placid smile peculiar to him, moved quietly about the table, without fuss or effort. I remembered Abraham and the angels as I looked on the heavenly expression of his countenance, and thought that he too might be worthy to entertain "an unbidden guest" unawares. "The servant of the servants" of God was the distinguishing title of one of the greatest popes who ever sat on the throne of St. Peter, and Pius is really worthy of that touching appellation. The ceremonial of the Cena was very simple. He first bore water to the apostles in a silver basin; then, after the "Benedicite," bishops and prelates, advancing from the end of the hall, presented to him various dishes, which he handed to the apostles, pouring out water and wine at intervals. The gentle anxiety with which he anticipated their wants was inexpressibly touching. He was evidently wrapped in mental devotion, and was only alive to the outward scene as far as it assimilated with and assisted his thoughts. Never when encircled by all the gorgeous pomp of his splendid court, crowned with the triple diadem and glittering with jewels, had the Pope so much impressed me.

The office of the "Tenebræ" again takes

place this evening in the Sistine Chapel, when the altar is divested of every ornament; the very carpets and hangings are removed; the Pope's chair is left without a back or a morsel of cloth on which to place his feet; the altar is hung with black; the crucifix is covered; and six candles are alone left to light up the doleful scene. Not wishing to encounter the crowd; I did not enter the Sala Regia until so late that I found it almost empty, every one having pressed into the portal or on the steps of the Sistine Chapel, from whence the soft wailing of the voices floated dreamily in the air above the hum of the pent-up thousands standing between me and the choir. At the opposite extremity of the hall a waving drapery undulated before the door of the Pauline Chapel, and a twilight of half-discerned stars, faintly lit up the surrounding darkness. Drawing aside the curtain, I entered. All was in the deepest, the most solemn gloom, save the altar or sepulchre as it is called, around which knelt a dark circle of almost invisible worshippers. But that illuminated sepulchre, how can I find words to describe its dazzling splendour? Never did the hand of man more bravely symbolise the immortal glories of the divine tomb than in this stupendous mountain of glittering light. Mounting to the lofty

ceiling, extending on either side in circles and clusters, and festoons of countless lights, there it rose, a glimmering, quivering, overwhelming mountain of brightness. The effect was thrilling. Tears rushed into my eyes, and Protestant though I am, *I* too knelt in the dark circle beside the glittering sepulchre, and remembered with awe the sacred symbol that rested within!

Afterwards I descended into St. Peter's. The portals were thrown wide open, and a few pale torches planted up the central aisle made darkness visible. The grand skeleton of the building alone emerged from the gloom, vast and boundless as the firmament, but a firmament unlit by moon or stars, and wrapped in everlasting night. The clustered pilasters, the colossal statues, loomed out in dim masses—gigantic forms, dreamy, fabulous, vague, fading away in fathomless distance. Here and there a momentary ray of light glimmered from the torches, was visible for a moment, and then melted away and was gone. There was something quite terrific in the scene, linking the mind to the wildest visions of chaotic gloom. Yet, even in this utter darkness, one bright symbol cheered the Christian; for, concealed behind the massive pilasters supporting the cupola, a flood of light burst from the illuminated sepulchre, shining

like a beacon, and beckoning the soul onwards through the dark valley with the bright hope of immortality.

At midnight we went to the convent of the Sacred Heart on the Pincian Hill. The door was cautiously opened by one of the French *religieuses* by whom the convent—an educational and charitable institution—is conducted. She scanned us long and inquiringly as we stood on the threshold, but knowing my voice, at length admitted us. We crept softly into the church by a side chapel, not to disturb the solemn service which had already commenced. The church, a large and well-proportioned building, was dimly lighted. Many worshippers knelt on the marble floor; some were almost prostrate before the altar; others, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, lost in prayer. I never beheld a scene where such an *abandon* of religious enthusiasm prevailed. The midnight hour, the darkened church, the affecting recollection of the awful event which they had met to commemorate, seemed present with all. Service was going on; but no word was spoken, either by the priest or by the congregation—not a sound, save a stifled sigh, broke the silence. Behind the high and solid iron bars, forming a screen between the body of the church and the

sanctum sanctorum of the high-altar, seats were placed. Presently a dark-robed, white veiled figure glided noiselessly in; another and another rapidly followed, each taking her place opposite the altar. Now a group would emerge from the recess behind the altar, then a single figure, and again a whole cluster of black forms, passing on like a vision of shadowy ghosts. It was all so dreamy and unearthly I more than once passed my hands across my eyes to make sure that I was awake.

Such was the number of white-veiled nuns that went floating by, that an hour had elapsed before they were all assembled. The front of the altar and the steps had then become filled, the richly-robed priest, his face turned towards the altar, standing in the midst. The awful stillness grew at last positively oppressive. One by one this sombre throng received the eucharist, bowed to the altar, and retired as noiselessly as she had entered. When all were gone, the priest turned towards the kneeling congregation, who advanced to the screen and received the sacrament. I never shall forget that night; it rests on my memory like a peep into the very courts of heaven.

Although launched in the midst of the Holy Week, I must delay no longer to chronicle a

happy day we spent last Monday, for fear the glowing impression should diminish.

I had heard much of the beauty of the *Pineta*, or pine woods of Castel Fusano, and I wished also to see Ostia, out of reverence for its classical associations. I do not care what antiquarians say. I throw down my glove to all of them. I can read Virgil as well as they, and I never will believe that Æneas landed at Porto d'Anzio, or anywhere else than at Ostia, where the localities so exactly tally with Virgil's description. So an excursion to Castel Fusano was arranged, which was to combine the delights of luxuriant Nature and classic memories—food for the head and the heart, not forgetting the poor body, which was cared for in a large basket, stowed away under the seat of the carriage: for the ethereal essences of our immortal being would have cut but a poor figure during a long spring day without the assistance and support of those much-abused but necessary accessories.

We left Rome by the Porta San Paolo, otherwise Ostiensis—one of the most picturesque entrances into the dear old city, rebuilt by Belisarius—flanked by the pyramid of Caius Cestius and the high turreted walls and towers beyond. And now we are driving along Tiber's banks into

a pathless wilderness of green, with nothing but the white mass of the Pauline Basilica to break the monotonous lines.

We were a quartet, S. W—— again standing for Sculpture in a very pleasant form, and K——s for Architecture; and C——, fresh from England, and myself; all enthusiastic, full of fancies and wild theories; so well crammed, indeed, with Virgil and the graceful legends of old Greece, that we were little better than pagans for the time being. We first began by talking ourselves hoarse about architecture; then we as rapidly discussed sculpture; and at last tired of chattering, settled down quietly to look at the Campagna. The soft morning air came balmily breathing across the aromatic turf, bearing rich odours of sweet herbs. Oh, those everlasting long lines! there they are again—the never-ending battle-fields I had so often traced, and of which the Campagna is literally a perpetual repetition.

Below is the broad open valley where one host lies encamped; above, the steeply-rising, undulating hills where the enemy waits entrenched, to be scaled and taken ere the day is won, and the audacious Carthaginian or the savage Gaul driven back to whence he came. Over and over

again the same scene occurs, especially in the lower parts of the Campagna, where the early conquests of the infant state were most fiercely contested. The sun shone brilliantly on that gracefully undulating plain leading down to the Hesperian strand; the birds skimmed rapidly over the verdant ground; and the classic Tiber, along whose banks we drove, curved and circled in many windings, now forming an island, now skirting a low wood, the reedy sedges rustling under overhanging trees. No snake ever lay more unquietly in the sun than does that broad river writhing across the plain. Sometimes we could discern three separate curves, the alternate strips of land and water lying terracewise before us, the broad belt of the Tyrrhene Sea circling all like an azure zone.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed K——s, as the sea first came in sight. "It would be worth coming from England only to see this view."

On the grassy green expanse, in the valleys and up the rifts of the hills, grew thousands of snow-white lilies, shooting up from masses of waxy leaves. They were unlike any other lilies I had ever seen—so grandly beautiful, with a certain weird look, as if the fairies met under their shadow on moonlight nights to dance fantastic

measures, and hold trysts with their sisters the butterflies and bright-winged beetles. These stately flowers could tell, I am sure, many a tale of Oberon and Titania and their tiny court when they hold high revel under the moonlight in still summer nights. Beside the lilies grew the purple Judas-trees, shedding thousands of ruddy leaves to the breeze. We were such children that we jumped out and filled the carriage with flowers, assisted by an old beggar who implored us, "by the tears of the Madonna," to give him a *bajocco*, in return for which he wished us all in paradise—a wish in which we, sinners as we were, being very happy on earth, profanely did not join.

Sixteen long miles lay between Rome and Ostia—the very voyage "the goddess-born" Æneas undertook when, warned by the god Tiberinus of impending danger, he committed himself and his companions to the "azure current." After we had accomplished the first half of the distance, we lost sight of "the noble river that rolls by the walls of Rome," and entered a woody copse. Straight as an arrow the road cleaves the low trees, until, gradually descending, we at last emerge, after many miles, on a lonely desolate region, neither sea nor land—sandy, uncultivated barren, indicative of sea, but with no sea visible

—a repulsive, melancholy scene, rank with weeds and reeds.

K——s, who had just arrived from London, was wild at having his romantic ideas so rudely scattered. “What!” cried he, “is this Ostia—the cradle of Rome—the harbour where the ‘Dardanian chief’ landed—where he won and wedded the daughter of the Latin king? What a sin!—what a shame that it should be allowed to sink into such undignified ruin! One can neither see the river nor the sea—abominable!”

I was, by experience, somewhat accustomed to these disappointments, Italy being a country in which I had often philosophised on Juliet’s theme of “What’s in a name?” This, then, was the once beautiful Ausonian shore, girt by the Tyrrhene Sea, “where Æneas descried a spacious grove, through which Tiberinus, god of the pleasant river Tiber, with rapid whirls and quantities of sand discoloured, bursts forward into the sea. All around and overhead various birds, accustomed to the banks and channel of the river, charmed the skies with their songs, and fluttered up and down the grove. Thither he commands his mates to bend their course and turn their prow towards land.”

"And now," said K——s, who had read to us this passage from Virgil, "'the Lydian river' that skirted Etruria's frontiers has disappeared, the groves are cut down, the birds have turned into croaking frogs, as noisy as if just transformed by Latona, and only the discoloured salt and all-choking sand remain. I wish I had not come."

But I, for my part, rejoiced to see the spot identified with Virgil's fabled hero, however changed by the accumulated sand of so many centuries, and notwithstanding the undeniable fact that the present *paese* of Ostia was rebuilt by Gregory XIV. at a distance of more than a mile from the ancient city. One therefore looks in vain for any fragments of King Latinus's old town, where he ruled in everlasting peace; the stately palace of Picus, raised on a hundred columns, and containing the statues of the ancient kings, Italus, and Sabinus, and old Saturn, "planter of the vine," and double-faced Janus. Gone, too, is the temple where the virgin Lavinia kindled the holy altars, and gone the ancient elms on the banks of the Sacred Stream, where the milk-white sow farrowed her litter of thirty young. Really, allowing for "poetical license," and with all possible respect for Virgil, I do think

it was a very impertinent thing for the newly-arrived Æneas to begin building a city without even asking leave; and so good old King Latinus seemed to think also, when he saw them marking out the walls and trenches.

The once "Hesperian strand" is now inhabited by swarms of the most unpleasant beggars draped in filthy rags, with pale, fever-stricken faces. These squalid inhabitants of modern Ostia gathered round us as we halted by the side of the gate, under the shadow of a fine old mediæval tower. A barefooted Franciscan friar, bearing a wallet, came and begged too; and troops of old women, as hideous as "baleful Alecto" when she rose from hell to torment the soul of Amata, clustered round our carriage, the classic distaff in their hands.

The road from Ostia to the famous pine forest is such a mere track, so rough and rugged and sandy, bordered by such ditches and holes, that it would be impracticable for a carriage anywhere but in Italy. The horses contrived, however, after immense efforts, to drag us through. At one moment we were hoisted on high, then we rolled down into the depths of a mighty rut, jolted and shaken to death. On either side of

this primitive road extended luxuriant, unenclosed corn-fields, stretching away towards the woody distance we had traversed—a rich and fertile prospect, extending to the foot of the Alban Hills, where many towns and villages dot their purple sides, while above tower the loftier mountains of the Abruzzi. The pine wood was bounded by a stagnant canal, whose unwholesome waters had become an aquatic garden. Gigantic reeds overmantled tangled masses of white and yellow water-lilies, meadow-sweet, and other sweetly-scented flowers. A moment more and we were within the deep shade of the solemn pine wood. No underwood or shrub broke the smooth level of delicate turf, or impeded our view of the lofty knotted trunks which so bravely supported their superincumbent masses of sombre foliage. Mysterious trees these, with murmuring branches that whispered, as it seemed to me, of far-off ages, when Feronia ruled the woods. An aromatic perfume scented the air, the natural incense Nature flings around her altars. Yes, this pine wilderness was beautiful.

Not far from the entrance to the forest stands in a spacious opening a castellated villa belonging to the Chigi family, interesting as the former site of Pliny's Laurentine villa. It is a residence

and a fortress, the solid square pile flanked by turreted towers and loopholes, while above rises a central campanile, at once a citadel and a belvedere, for enjoyment and for defence. In our civilised age, and in a season of profound peace, such precautions may appear excessive, but situated as this villa is in a forest so near the sea, exposed alike to the attacks of banditti and pirates, they are far from being unwise or ridiculous.

Before the casino or villa, on a grassy plateau, stands an altar surrounded by woods, a fit shrine to Picus or Faunus, or the nymphs and dryads who rove within these sacred shades. Here on the velvet turf the priests about to sacrifice to the sylvan deities might have lain on outspread sheepskins, and slumbered through the sable night, waiting to commence their rites when the Aurora's shining feet first trod the threshold of the morn.

We turned into a lofty avenue of ilex, leading by a broad straight way paved with lava blocks towards the sea. Not a single shrub or tree of living green varied the peculiar colouring of these sacred woods, which stretched far away, dark, solemn, and mysterious; the distant waves softly murmuring beyond. It was a scene as of another

world—calling forth other centuries and other races, and invoking an old poetic faith to people its recesses. We did not talk together, so unreal and strange was the solemn enchantment around. The ground was thickly overrun with rosemary, as in the time of Pliny (the delicate blue blossoms loading the slender stalk), flowering daphne, wild myrtle, Venus's plant, and other aromatic herbs and shrubs, perfuming this temple of the sylvan gods, whose roof was the unclouded heavens, upheld by countless pillars of the rusty pine, leading away into colonnades and naves, shrines and sanctuaries of unspeakable beauty.

I can scarcely describe the strange fancies that haunt me among the evergreen pine and ilex woods of Italy, where a funereal veil, beautiful as night, descends over the radiant face of verdant Nature; for as night is to day, so are the dark shades of those solemn trees to the bright garish colouring of other forests. It has been said that there is a philosophy in the trunks of trees. The strange contortions of the olive, gnarled and knotted by the growth of centuries, have been instanced as displaying every phase and development of human passion—the grim, morose old man in hoary trees bowed with age; triumphant youth in the stalwart sapling, strong, and fresh,

and vigorous, amorously wooing the soft breezes; the growing wrinkles and coming anxieties of middle life marked in the aspect of another still vigorous tree that yet waves aloft its ample boughs of bluish green, loaded with black fruit. But, for my part, I see nothing so characteristic among Southern trees as the ilex and the pine, which are formed by Nature as if to express human passions. Dante himself must have been sensible of these picturesque associations when he represents the Harpies as wailing among the branches of dark pines, and ever and anon displaying their horrid faces from amid the foliage. To-day there was a heavy sighing sound in the wind as it passed over the pine-tops that recalled to me this poetic image. A mysterious fear came over me. I would not for worlds have plucked one of the branches that lay across our path. I am sure blood would have flowed, and that I should have heard the melancholy groan of some imprisoned spirit crying out, as did Piero delle Vigne in the "*Inferno*," "Why pluckest thou me?" ("*Perchè mi schianate?*")

Lovely as it was to wander through the woods and weave unnumbered fancies under their classic shade, the hour warned us to proceed, and we returned into the majestic avenue leading to the

shore. Beyond the forest lay a sandy belt overgrown with low fir trees. We mounted a little sand-hill, and behold, there was the glorious ocean, its azure waves breaking on the yellow strand at our feet! Magnificent beyond imagination, beyond expression, was that burst. The boundless sea came before us like a newly-created element, glittering with beams of golden light, its deep blue waters putting the very heavens to shame. Not a ripple furrowed the surface of the deep, the water just broke in a creamy fringe against the tawny shore, and the dark lines of the Laurentine forest stretched far away towards Ardea, along the Circinian strand.

Old Neptune held his court to-day, and all Nature combines to do him honour, as in the by-gone time, when Dolphin, radiant in gold and azure scales, bore his amorous message to Amphitrite, dwelling deep in ocean's caves, where corals and pearls and sparkling shells strew the ground, and many-hued seaweeds wave in the blue depths.

Oh, Italy! dazzling daughter of the South, lying like a gorgeous flower on the ocean's shore, what visions dost thou invoke by land and sea!

But the happiest dreams must end. Our clas-

sical rhapsodies were rudely broken by discovering the lateness of the hour, and—shame to say, spite of the goddesses and the nymphs, and the winds and the waves—by the humiliating fact *that we were very hungry*. Even K——s, who had sat spellbound in a sort of enchantment, was fain to confess “that the poor body called loudly on the merciless spirit to have pity on its wants.” So we took refuge in the dreary hut of a charcoal-burner, and discussed our Italian meal of wine and fruit and cake in an upper chamber—a most musty, uncomfortable place after our Arcadian seat in the woods.

As we again approached the fine old tower at Ostia rising so grandly out of the surrounding desolation, other recollections occurred to me very antagonistic to the visionary worship I had been paying to the false gods of paganism. St. Augustine, the prop and pillar of the mediæval Church, has, in his affecting “Confessions,” irrevocably connected his name with Ostia. It was here that he landed on first arriving from Africa, to be instructed and perfected in the Christian faith, accompanied by his mother Monica, of whom he has left so interesting a description.

It was at Ostia that St. Ignatius, the friend

of Polycarp and disciple of St. John, landed when he came from his bishopric at Antioch to be massacred in the great Flavian Amphitheatre.

It was to Ostia that Marius fled when overcome by the troops of his rival, Sylla. Stained with the blood of the noblest Romans, he fled alone; for all had abandoned the now aged tyrant. A single friend, Numerius, awaited him in a small vessel, which after many mishaps and chances bore him to Carthage.

Ostia was to the emperors a suburban watering-place. They loved to sail up and down the Tiber in regal magnificence, the whole surrounding country decked out to do them honour. Old Claudius, the stupidest of hoodwinked husbands, built the port, and amused himself by loitering here while Messalina dragged the imperial purple in the filth of Rome. Hither her accusers came, and imparted to him the astounding fact that she had publicly married another man; to which he replied, like the fool that he was, "Am I an emperor?"

And in the old times, too, there were brave pageants at Ostia, such as when Paulus Æmilius, after his conquest of Macedon and the capture of King Perseus, landed there with his royal pri-

soner. But I have done. I feel I am off again on my Pegasus on quite another tack, one that would carry me as far as did the gods and goddesses in the Laurentian forest.

CHAPTER VII.

The Adoration—The Lateran—Mass of the Resurrection—Trinità dei Pellegrini—An Anecdote—The Environs of Rome—Rocca di Papa—Maria—Home Scenes.

I NOW resume my account of the Eastern ceremonies. All Rome mourns to-day, as mourned the Virgin before the cross of Calvary. It is Good Friday, and an awful gloom hangs over the city. Every one looks sad and melancholy; an incessant tolling of bells strikes the ear; the churches are filled with worshippers, who kneel before the denuded altars and darkened shrines with every outward semblance of sorrow and repentance. "Assume a virtue if you have it not," says Hamlet. At least the very sight is edifying, as bringing forcibly to one's mind the solemn anniversary in which all Christians join.

During the mass in the Sistine Chapel, the Pope, discarding his crimson slippers and divesting himself of his cope and mitre, descends from his throne, and advances towards the crucifix on the altar, which is veiled in black. Three times he

bows in adoration before the symbolic image of the Redeemer's passion; then, prostrating himself, he reverently kisses the pierced feet, which are partially uncovered, whilst the whole choir intone the beautiful chant, "Venite, adoremus." Three times is this ceremony repeated, the harmony ascending each time in a higher key, until at the conclusion the entire figure on the cross is exposed. There is a dramatic yet deeply touching pathos in this rite, calculated to conquer the indifference of the most callous Protestant, and to make even a careless Catholic tremble. In the afternoon the "Tenebræ" are repeated for the third and last time, to the same vain and irreverent auditory. At its conclusion I went into St. Peter's, whither the Pope soon after repairs to adore the relics. An immense crowd was assembled. After a while some guards, in handsome uniforms of blue, marched up the nave, forming a passage for the court, the Swiss Guard, and the Guardia Nobile. Last of all appeared Pius, always calm and benignant, but looking excessively heated and fatigued. When he had reached the Confessional (the subterranean tomb of the Apostles before the altar), he knelt at a desk prepared for him; then, taking in his hand a printed form of prayer, the relics were exposed from the gallery

over the statue of Santa Veronica, illuminated for the occasion. When the ceremony was concluded, the Holy Father rose, drew off his spectacles, put them in the pocket of his superb vestment, and retired, followed by his sumptuous court all glittering with crimson and gold. This ceremony did not impress me at all.

Saturday.—To-day I went with H——ns to the Lateran. He was, as usual, instructive and entertaining, and eager to explain the devout significance of all we saw. He explained to me that the services of this day, commemorating the resurrection, are anticipated, so as not to be celebrated at midnight, as was the custom in the primitive Church. "The whole service," said he, "still supposes the time to be night. A source of the highest antiquarian interest," added he, "is to be found in the Catholic system of symbolism, which has appropriated from every source most pregnant and beautiful imagery and many typical forms. In the mystic significance of our ceremonies we are carried back to ages of which history only preserves imperfect records—to the wild mythology of the North, the profound mysticism of the East, to intellectual Greece and victorious Rome—each and all recalled by many of the external ceremonies of the Catholic ritual; for the

Church—like the sun, which absorbs all other light—in appropriating those forms, has sanctified them to the loftiest and holiest purposes.” I need not add that H——ns is a devout Catholic.

In the meantime we arrived at the Lateran, where an immense number of white-robed young priests were assembled round the high-altar, this being the day when all the clergy are expected to communicate. The relics of St. Paul are exhibited. H——ns, however, hurried me away to the old Baptistery near the basilica, in order to obtain a place for witnessing the christening. The circular building, with is not large, was densely thronged, the spectators being arranged on raised seats round the centre, where the large alabaster vase stands, used as a font by Constantine, and in which Rienzi is said to have bathed before assuming knighthood. The heat was so intense that it required some resolution to keep our seats. At last the procession appeared, preceded by incense-bearers and deacons. First came the officiating cardinal, in splendid vestments, and, following him, the two candidates for baptism—one a Jew, from the Ghetto, a sullen, morose sinner, who looked capable of committing murder or sacrilege for the value of a *scudo*; the other a young negro girl, as black as ebony, her

bare woolly head of cropped hair giving her, but for her white drapery, much the appearance of a boy. There was something gentle and devout in her countenance and bearing, singularly contrasting with the stolid insensibility of her companion, who stared round at the company with audacious eyes in a most unedifying manner. Much interest was felt for this negro girl. She had been brought as a slave from Africa to Leghorn, where she became a Christian, escaped from her proprietors, and was redeemed by that excellent fraternity the Trinitarians, which is ever on the watch at these seaports to help and protect the wanderer, the orphan, and the slave. The cardinal and deacons grouped themselves very picturesquely round the baptismal vase, and the ceremony began. Water was thrown on the head of the two neophytes. By one it was received with sullen indifference, by the other with devotional fervour. The negro girl's head was reverently bowed in earnest prayer, and she looked so deeply affected that I feared every moment she would faint.

As soon as the rite at the Baptistry was concluded, H——ns, who had been quite touched by the earnest piety of the poor negro girl, hurried me off without the loss of a moment to St. Peter's. Service was proceeding in the choir when

we entered; the altar was concealed by a black veil; a low, lugubrious chant told of mourning and desolation. But at a given signal a magic change took place; the *Gloria in Excelsis*, accompanied by the organ, burst forth in a rapturous pæan of triumphant harmony; the veil before the altar was rent with a loud crash, displaying a magnificent tapestry of the resurrection of our Lord; the paschal candle (an enormous torch placed beside the altar) blazed forth; the deep-toned bells of St. Peter's rang out a joyous peal, responded to by every belfry in the vast city; and the cannon of the Castle of San Angelo boomed solemnly over all. What a rapturous burst it was when the Old World rose, as it were, to new life to greet her Saviour emerged from the tomb! A thrill, an electric shock, passed over the whole congregation. Happiness and devout joyfulness beamed in every face; loving, earnest eyes were turned towards heaven; every knee was bowed in solemn thanksgiving; while the exulting strains of the loudly-pealing organ seemed to carry up the soul in a bright stream of harmonious ecstasy. The *Gloria* was followed by a grand *Hallelujah*, chanted by the full strength of the beautiful choir; while the sculptured walls of the chapel, vaults, arches, and painted cupolas seemed actually to

quiver and shake with the triumphant chorus of earth rejoicing over her risen Saviour!

The mass ended, every one turned to his neighbour, wishing him a *buona pasqua*; the canons advanced towards the officiating cardinal with the same salutation; the priests repeated it again to the canons and to each other; beautiful flowers made their appearance, and were handed among the clergy from friend to friend with the same soul-stirring salutation. We passed out into the mighty aisles of the vast basilica, where thousands were saluting each other with a like holy greeting, and again bright flowers passed from hand to hand. An air of jubilee was on every face. Altars and shrines were now uncovered; the golden lamps before the Confessional were again lighted; cannon roared in the distance; musketry sounded; military music came floating through the entrance; the bells rang joyous peals—for the new year had begun, the sacred year when Jesus rose, and it was meet and fit that earth and all her children should rejoice!

In the evening we went to the Trinità dei Pellegrini, a *confraternità* founded by that most holy man, San Filippo Neri, for those pilgrims who desire to avail themselves of the indulgences conceded by the Church during the Holy Week, *ad*

limina apostolorum. Each day during the Holy Week hundreds of men and women arrive, and are entertained for three days free of charge; and every evening lay members of the association, including all the illustrious of either sex in Rome, assemble here, wash the pilgrims' feet, and afterwards attend on them at supper.

We ascended an interminable staircase on the women's side of the building, situated in a close network of narrow streets in the neighbourhood of the Tiber, near the Farnese Palace. On entering the suite of apartments devoted to the female pilgrims, we found ourselves in the midst of light and life, bustle and activity. Many poor wayfarers, pale, dusty, and fatigued, were seated round the walls, staring inquiringly at the novel scene. They were generally of the very poorest class, but looked neat and clean, and were habited in the romantic mediæval dress with which ballads and legends invest all pilgrims—namely, the dark grey or black robe, the large cape sprinkled with cockle-shells, the broad-brimmed hat of straw or felt, sandalled shoes, a gourd, and a long staff. There is something very poetical about a dress that awakens so many romantic associations. Many visitors were present, passing from room to room; while the sisterhood of the convent, in

dresses of grey serge and with white cowls, glided about, contrasting well with the noble ladies, members of the institution, who wore curious costumes of red and black, quite as strange and mediæval-looking as the dresses of the pilgrims themselves. What lovely faces I saw! what aristocratic features, brilliant eyes, and classical heads!

After a time the great crowd of visitors had collected in a long gallery, where, behind a railed-in space on either side, the tables were spread for supper. Here we waited until the press would allow of our descending to the apartment where the feet were washed. An old lady, the Countess M——, emerged from the crowd, leading forward her niece, a lovely girl, affianced to the wealthy Marquis D——. “My niece,” said the countess to my friend Madame L——, who, habited in the lay costume, stood near, “*vuol far qualche opera di misericordia*: may she assist?” Whereupon Madame L—— assented, and the beautiful girl, smiling and blushing, was arrayed in the prescribed dress of black, with great red sleeves and apron, and led away below to wash dirty feet, happy as a queen. After a due proportion of scuffling, crushing, and pushing (for many English were present), we also descended.

In the lower room sat between fifty or sixty

most miserable-looking pilgrims, their feet and legs begrimed with travel-stains. To my thinking, these appeared ten times more wretched than those I had seen above, but it might be that the strong light thrown on them from the lamps brought out all their soils in high relief. Their feet—but I will spare your feelings by not further mentioning them—rested on the edges of wooden tubs of hot water; their stockings, shoes, or sandals were laid beside them; the noble ladies knelt by the tubs on the bare brick floor, their white arms uncovered, their beauteous heads bowed down, waiting the signal to begin. When all was ready, a cardinal in full dress appeared, and, standing in the centre of the room, read a Latin prayer. While he read, the washing began, and sure such rubbing and scrubbing and eager anxiety were never seen. I passed round and saw them working with right good-will, their white hands and arms dabbling in the dirty water, and contrasting very strangely with the sunburnt skin of the poor women, who seemed, on the whole, quite shocked. Others, however, looking on it in its proper light as an act of devotion, repeated *Aves* and *coronas*. Some endeavoured to assist, and were not permitted by the pretty ladies, who would do all themselves; and some sat staring stolidly, over-

come with astonishment. There was the R——, the haughtiest princess in Rome, hard at work, a little coronet of gold just visible in her coal-black hair; and the Marchesa C——, the most zealous of English converts; and the sweet bride-elect whom I had seen above so anxious to assist. No one can describe the grace and gentleness with which the latter performed her revolting duty. When she had satisfied her conscience by a most vigorous washing, she stooped down, kissed the pilgrim's feet, drew on the coarse stockings and the clumsy, dirty shoes, and then rose. The poor contadina, evidently quite touched by her great beauty and kindness, invoked an audible blessing on her. "*E un vero angelo di beltà, una santa di Dio,*" added the woman, loud enough for the whole room to hear; whereupon all the bystanders turned and looked, making the gracious bride blush redder than roses. Oh, well be it with thee, thou fair bride, in coming years, and may the blessing invoked on thy young head by the poor pilgrim be chronicled in the courts of heaven!

I can give no account of the service on Easter Sunday, for I was too unwell to attend the high mass at St. Peter's. Truth to tell, I am glad of the excuse, for I hate to describe what everybody has seen. Instead, I will note down an anecdote.

Lady C—— (who, as Mrs. Grundy said, had enjoyed herself in her day), when she was old and frail, set up her tent in the Eternal City, where she lived like a real princess. By some chance she rented the magnificent Barberini Palace, the place where the lovely Cenci lives enshrined in the picture-gallery. How, or why, or wherefore, those haughty magnates condescended to let their vast ancestral palace I cannot tell; but certain it is they did so, and that for many years her ladyship lived there like a fairy queen, for she was of extremely diminutive stature. She gave dinners to artists, who condescended to patronise her in consideration of the grand banquets they enjoyed in the old feudal halls; she had many gentlemen friends, but no female ones; she had a suite of attendants, servants, *maestro di casa*, pages, women, men, and boys—like an Eastern Begum; and she had also a *scopatore*—a humble sweeper of those gilded saloons, a common Italian *canaglia*, who seemed to have as much connection with his be-satined and be-jewelled little mistress as I with Hercules. Nevertheless, strange things do happen, and it is on the countess and the *scopatore* that my tale hangs.

She was given to purchasing ornaments,

bronzes, cameos, antiquities, and other beautiful things for the adornment of her sumptuous apartments. Well, all at once, one thing was lost, and then another, and, what was worse, the things never turned up again. My lady threatened the *maestro di casa* that if the articles were not reproduced she would sweep her palace of all her domestics as clean as the *tramontana* sweeps off the falling leaves in autumn.

"*Sua eccellenza*," said the man, "you are not the only sufferer; we also have been robbed of clothes and of various things."

"Whom do you suspect?" asks the lady.

"Why, to tell the truth, signora, we all suspect Rocco."

Who was Rocco? The great little lady had never even heard the name of this obscure attendant. Rocco was the humble sweeper of the marble floors of miladi's palace. Of course he was instantly to be dismissed. Rocco was to go, and he went: miladi, in her satin boudoir, never wasted a thought on that obscure lump of clay.

One night, not long after, Lady C—— lay in bed—pillowed, as such dames are, in dainty lace and fine linen—between waking and sleeping, in a half-dreamy state of conscious unconsciousness,

when she heard the handle of her door turn. In a moment she was sitting up in bed. A figure entered, bearing a light—bearing, too, something that gleamed in his hand.

“Who’s there?” screamed my lady.

“Rocco,” replied a hollow voice.

In an instant the truth flashed across her mind: Rocco, the *scopatore*, was there, come to have his *vendetta*. He had penetrated into the interior of the palace he knew so well, and was going to murder her! Now, the little lady was not wanting in spirit—she was no coward; so, when she heard this ominous name, she first seized the bell-rope beside her, and then darted out of bed towards a door opening into a corridor opposite. As she rushed out, Rocco bounded after her, and, with murderous haste, clutched her by her night-clothes in the passage. Finding herself within his gripe, she flung herself against him like a cat, and clung to him with the agonised hold of terrified despair. A death-struggle ensued between the wiry little countess and the strong *scopatore*. The light which he held was extinguished, but, ere it fell, she saw the upraised dagger—a moment more, and she felt it ploughing the skin in the back of her neck, blow after blow, quick as they could fall. The more he

stabbed (and many were the wounds he inflicted), the tighter she clung to him. As they struggled she fell against a table, and he lost his hold; at the same moment the steward—who had heard the bell ring, but had stopped to put on his clothes—appeared with a light. Rocco rushed back by the way he had come, too quickly to be caught; and the poor little countess was picked up deluged in blood, and with two of her teeth (perhaps they were false, *chi lo sa?*) knocked out.

By earliest dawn information was given to the police. An immense sensation was excited. A peeress to be stabbed in her own palace—in her bedroom—to be dead, or dying—the assassin to have escaped! All this was tremendous. Every engine was set to work to discover Rocco; every hole of the Eternal City—and the holes where the wretched and criminal congregate in squalid poverty are many and horrible—was ransacked. At last Rocco was unearthed and put in prison; further, he was tried and condemned to the galleys for life. The man had the presumption to send to the countess for money while she lay in her bed recovering from the wounds he had inflicted. And she actually gave him money. Yes, the naughty little countess, whom ladies were too

virtuous to visit, sent the assassin money to cheer his weary hours in that loathsome prison. Blessings on her kind heart! Poor Rocco never went to the galleys. He died in prison, and with his last breath begged the pardon of his generous mistress.

She soon got the better of her wounds, which were but flesh-cuts, and lived to tell the story of "*her own murder*," as she called it, as she sat heading her amply-furnished board. She told it well, and it was esteemed a good anecdote. Now she is dead, the little countess, and all that remains of her is a pair of tiny feet sculptured in marble, a monument of vanity, in the corner of a certain studio under the shadow of the palace where she flourished. But there is a register in the good angels' book that shall not be forgotten in that solemn day of reckoning when the humble *scopatore* and the dainty countess shall stand together before the Great Judge.

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Delightful as is the climate of Rome, its very mildness renders it so exceedingly enervating and exhausting, that after a residence of six or seven months the debilitated constitution requires a change. But the question is where to go—a query

not so easily answered. Perhaps no large city in the world was ever more in want of suburban resources—a want arising from the vast extent of the desolate Campagna, which clasps the city on all sides with an arid girdle. Here not a house is to be seen, neither man nor beast thriving on that unwholesome soil, which, with its deadly night exhalations, is so pernicious in summer as to drive the very cattle from their pastures. One must journey sixteen long miles by rail or road to Albano, or L’Aricia, or Frascati, before anything in the shape of summer quarters appears. What weary pilgrimages I made! What horrible dens (all the property of princes) did I behold! It was positively sickening to walk through them. Each time I returned home more and more disgusted. At last we heard of unexceptionable apartments at Rocca di Papa, which we fixed upon at once. The Rocca, seen distinctly from Rome to the right of Frascati, is a regular eagle’s nest perched on the outskirts of the Alban Hills. At a distance the place looks unattainable except by an aerial railway or a balloon; but we shall see. The air is the purest in the neighbourhood of Rome, and the sea breezes come sweeping over its woods with a delicious coolness.

We have reached our *villeggiatura*, and

are—— But I must tell things in order. At four o'clock we ordered the carriage, our luggage having preceded us in a most primitive cart drawn by two great oxen. As I descended the steep stairs leading from our rooms, *al secondo*—those regular Roman stairs, filthy and abominable in spite of remonstrances—and looked into the recesses of the interior *cortile* (a place which, in London, would infallibly be pounced on by the sanitary commissioners by reason of its varied and most potent smells), I really felt quite sentimental, and could not bear the idea of turning my back on wonderful Rome even for a temporary absence. But this weakness yielded to anticipations of the rural beauty and historic recollections in store for me on the Alban Hills; so, wafting an adieu to the stately Pincian Hill, and giving a salute to the dome of St. Peter's and the Coliseum, we drove out by the Lateran Gate. The Campagna traversed, we mount the lower spurs of the Alban Hills, towards Grotta Ferrata. A fair and pleasant scene opens before us; cultivation reappears; there are olive-grounds bearing rich promise of fruit, and great vineyards sloping down on the sunny side of the valleys towards gushing streamlets. There is an old ruined tower high on a rugged mound, above which the hills

whither we are journeying rise almost perpendicularly into the blue sky, mildly mellowed by the approach of evening. Now we are at Grotta Ferrata, a small village clustering filially round a castellated monastery—a feudal pile that frowns down over a turfy meadow, and is approached by several noble avenues of ancient elms. Within that monastery are Domenichino's glorious frescoes; but—*pazienza!* not a word of description—we must reach the Rocca. The poor horses, hot and weary, rest for a moment before the *osteria*, a locality where fleas abound, and *salame* would be dressed swimming in oil—ideas which alarm us so much that we do not descend. So an old man comes hobbling out with a wicker bottle in his hand, and asks if “the *eccellenze* will not drink.” “No, they won't.” So off he limps, wishing us a “*buon viaggio*” with as much earnest unction as if we were bound for the moon on Astolfo's hippogriff. The horses having recovered their wind, we plunge into cavernous lanes, and along roads scattered over with huge boulders that must have lain there since the days when Ascanius founded Alba. But if the roads are rough, how lovely is the matted tangle of flowers and moss clothing the high banks on either side—the clematis, the vine, and the fair convolvulus

wreathing every stone and branch with exquisite garlands!

This road is interminable. It becomes worse and worse, and we seem to sink deeper and deeper between the rocky banks.

"If we should meet anything—only fancy!"

No sooner are the words spoken than, turning a sharp angle, a file of loaded carts appears, bearing down on us. Now what is to be done?

"Have the grace to stop," cries our Jehu.

The drivers respond, "*Sì, sì*; all is well. You shall pass." (The Italians, when not provoked, are *so* polite!)

Then, after unheard-of exertions in the way of talking and screaming (for nothing *can* be done here without an immoderate amount of palaver), the oxen and the carts are dragged to one side, and Jehu, smacking his whip, proceeds.

When we at last emerged from those deep lanes we found ourselves in a boundless forest of splendid chestnuts—a rare old wood, shut in by lofty mountains veiled with the same leafy covering. Evening shed around soft tints, deepening the shadows and dimming the vistas through these ancient trees, whose silvery trunks caught the last rays of the departing sun. But most beautiful of

all was the broom, which formed a golden under-wood glorious to behold. On the rising hills, in the wooded chasms, deep in the valleys, waved the gilded shrubs, forming masses of colour that, blending with the bright green, were perfectly dazzling.

A steep ascent now lay before us, and a little opening in the overarching boughs disclosed the Rocca, high on the topmost mountain-peak—a grey mysterious pile, looking spitefully down, as if mocking our efforts to reach it. It positively looks as distant as it did from the Campagna! How the poor horses strive to pull the carriage up that endless hill! And so they must, for already the stars are appearing, and the dark wood glooms and closes around us like a vision. In a grotto beside the road a little shrine has been raised to the Madonna. It contains a picture of her bearing the Jesus-child; a lamp burns dimly before it, and sheds its flickering gleam across the road; flowers are placed near in broken cups; and a bright carpet of yellow broom-flowers has been spread in honour of the Virgin-mother. As we proceed (slowly enough now, for it is almost dark) some one suggests *brigands*, which makes us all uncomfortable; but as no one likes to own it, a dead silence ensues. At last we stop; we are come as

far as the carriage can take us, and must walk up to the house—*E così buona notte!*

Early this morning I threw open the green *persiani* and looked out. Never shall I forget the thrill of rapturous delight with which I beheld that glorious view. The very universe seemed lying at my feet. Description can do but scant justice to that majestic union of woods, green and golden, that melt lovingly into plains, which in their turn melt into a city backed by pale blue mountains. The mountains blend in the dim aerial distance with the ocean; and the ocean in its turn dissolves into the heavens. Beneath me lies the boundless measureless Campagna—a soft desert, waving, undulating, billowy, reflecting every change of the passing clouds, now darkened with vast masses of shade, now dancing, dazzling, in the burning sunshine—an earthly main, changeful and fitful as its prototype the sea. There were the yellow corn-fields, the emerald pastures, the wildernesses of barren grass, burnt up and calcined; while here and there rose a sombre tomb, a ruined tower, or a columned villa. Beyond, raised on a stately mountain-terrace, lay Rome—that great and unutterable Sphinx-word which the last judgment only shall unfold—throned on her seven legendary hills; here and there a bright light or

glistening point revealing some stately portico, or dome, or obelisk—yet all vague and undefined as that Eternity to which her existence is so mysteriously linked.

To the right, where the mighty prairie fades into the cloudy distance, abruptly rises Monte Soracte—Apollo's ancient home—lone and solitary, its rugged sides and the connecting mountains darkened by the Cimmerian forest, which leads the eye on to the graceful chain of the Sabine Hills. To the left, a line of silver struggles through the plain, twisting and twining like a glittering cord—the sacred Tiber flowing on towards Ostia and the sea. Oh, the heavenly breezes that came fresh and cool as the breath of morning! Well was it with me in this beauteous solitude, where all Nature—land, and sea, and air—danced and rejoiced, as if sympathising with my delight.

Nearer at hand lay Grotta Ferrata, Marino, and Castel Gondolfo domed and Oriental-looking, cresting the topmost headland of the Alban Lake. Behind me uprose the conical height of Monte Cavo, a diadem of ancient trees waving before the white convent on its summit; while lower down, on the opposite side, a broad defile, once the Latin Valley, cleft asunder the heights of

ancient Tusculum, now fertile and verdant with the gardens of modern Frascati. As I gazed, images of fabulous and historic Rome floated before my eyes—Virgil, Horace, quaint old Livy, courtly Tacitus, and bitter Suetonius were here—no shadows of antiquity, but real living men. On this land they had lived, on these mountains they had sung, on those plains the heroes whose deeds they immortalised had fought and conquered. Classic history lay like a book before me—page after page to be read in these fair lines, these desolate valleys, and yon boundless expanse!

* * * * *

We are becoming settled in our new home, which English readers would think passing strange. A great gaping door opens from the street (big enough to accommodate a carriage and six) into a huge passage or hall, a cross between a dungeon and a cellar, where the horses stand, and the boys enjoy a game of *mora*—*un, due, trè, sempre l'istesso*. Stone stairs, very rarely swept, mount up various stories to a kind of Babel altitude, each story being considered as a separate house, having its door and bell. On the first piano some Italians are enjoying the *villeggiatura*, dividing their time between sleeping and eating, the latter

operation being announced by a most potent smell of garlic. Their windows are always closed, and they scarcely ever go out; so they must have a lively time of it. But I forget, there *is* something going on at Rocca di Papa, which affords matter for gossip and entertainment to the languid natives. A Contessa, brown and dried as a walnut-shell, after having passed a life of *divertimento* and made much scandal in her day, has become a widow, and now receives the tender addresses of a certain young marquis of the Guardia Nobile, who is as poor as Job, and as extravagant as the Prodigal. When his purse is light, he mounts and rides to visit his ancient Phyllis, who, with rapturous welcome, gives him no end of money and love. Both favours received, the gallant knight rides back again to Rome, leaving the venerable Contessa inconsolable until the next time his pockets want relining. "*Telle est la vie, même au fond des forêts!*"

We rusticate above in rooms unconscious of carpets, but laid down with fine scagliola floors. Sometimes we have meat for dinner; sometimes we get only brown bread and eggs; at other times, thanks to our Mercuries, the *carbonari* from Albano and Frascati, we revel in the Egyptian flesh-pots.

Besides our own *servitù* there is a mixed and heterogeneous crowd always loitering about. First and foremost comes Maria, a stalwart contadina, with the fresh ruddy look of a rustic Hebe. She carries all the water used in the house in a great brass vessel on her head, and carries it nobly, with the air and step of a water-nymph, up those long, long flights of stairs. Maria flaunts about with a red handkerchief floating from her head, her hair pierced by a silver arrow—long, and sharp, and dangerous—a weapon she can use, too, should occasion require; for a dark devil lurks in Maria's flashing eyes. Round her neck are suspended long strings of coral, giving her, as connected with the brass vessel and the water generally, a mermaid character. On Sundays and festa days Maria puts on a smart red petticoat, with green ribbons, and a gorgeous pair of purple stays, trimmed with a profusion of white lace. She has gold earrings and a cross, which *may* be taken off; but the coral I believe she sleeps in. There are dark stories about Maria, otherwise a kind, genial soul, ever ready with her sparkling smile and hearty "*Stia bene, signora.*" She is married to a brute, a species of *cacciatore*, who divides his time between wandering in the forest and drinking in the *Spaccio di Vino*, from whence

it was "his custom of an afternoon" to return home dead drunk, and to beat Maria dreadfully.

Maria, who was a comely girl, and might have married better, but for an unhappy hankering after this unworthy Nimrod, bore it meekly for some time. She bore his blows in silence, shedding sad and bitter tears over her blighted love—her true and honest love. But she was an Italian. Hot fever-blood flowed in her veins; and by-and-by desire for the *vendetta* tugged like a gloomy spirit at her heart-strings. She would have vengeance—vengeance on the man who had so basely ill-used her.

The opportunity was not long wanting. Ferdinando soon staggered into their wretched hovel, royally drunk, and flung himself upon the nuptial couch (Anglicè, the only bed they possessed). Maria, in ominous silence, was awaiting his return. She rose, and taking her needles and scissors, the weapons of our sex, sat down beside the bed on which her debased husband lay wrapped in a bestial sleep, and began to sew. Yes, to sew—stitching the two sheets firmly and securely together! Her hand did not tremble, but there was a deadly look in her black eyes all the while, pregnant of evil. She sewed until Ferdinando

was entirely enclosed as in a net; then she rose—her eyes flashing a still darker fire—and proceeded to a certain corner where he kept his guns, and sticks, and knives. Her hand fell intuitively on a big stiletto knife; but it trembled a little, and was withdrawn. She paused, then firmly clutched the largest and heaviest bludgeon there. A Satanic smile came over her face as she raised the heavy stick and dealt him a portentous blow; then another and another, until the drunken man, suddenly sobered by the pain, writhed and swayed in agony, as he lay weltering in his blood. His piteous cries aroused the neighbours, who came bursting in. They shrank back appalled at the ghastly sight; for Maria, wild with evil passions, stood like an avenging Fury over her husband, remorseless, unsexed, maddened. She was seized from behind, and the weapon forced from her grasp. Recalled to herself, she swooned away. Her husband, when extricated from the sheets, was all but dead. Months passed ere he recovered, a cowed and humbled man, who shrank away from Maria like a beaten cur. Poverty forced them still to live under the same roof, but they never spoke. When we came there, a year had passed, and Maria looked jovial and happy. She had conquered; and but for a certain dark flash-

ing of the eye, I could not have believed so dire a tale.

We have a farm-yard behind the villa—more like an English farm-yard than any I have seen in Italy; and I love it for the sake of my far-off fatherland. There are great stacks of firewood; and tribes of poultry; and three melancholy geese wandering about in search of water, which they never find; and horses that come from the woods for their evening feed; and dogs that lie all day asleep in the shade. But, after all, it is not English; for down comes quiet Michele, the serving-man, at the *Ave Maria* in the pleasant evening time, followed by a troop of grey oxen with mighty horns, and strings of mules laden with wood, and horses carrying on their backs piled-up sheaves of sweet-scented hay from the upper pastures on Hannibal's Camp. Here, too, is the hillside garden terraced with vines; and the long *pergola* (arbour) draped with young grapes, under which my children play at *bocci* in the shade; and there is a sound of low chanting from the monastery, in the wood below, when the monks meet for evening prayer.

But I have not yet introduced you to half the humours of our rock-home, the houses of which are, as it were, chained to the rock, something



after the manner of Prometheus. There are Maria's children, who gather about the doors, and roll in the dust, or sleep on the bare stones—hardy little wretches, as ignorant of soap as of algebra. Luigi, the youngest, has his mother's eyes, and is a real little beauty, fat, and round, and graceful as a young Cupid, if he were only cleaned from the dirt contracted during his two year's life. He is always to be seen flourishing a large table-knife, threatening instant *felo de se* when he rolls from the top of a certain flight of stairs to the bottom—a feat he contrives to perform many times every day. His great delight is to sit in the midst of the cocks and hens and the three misanthropic geese, which come crowding round him with an unwarrantable freedom, pecking at the morsel of bread he is munching—a liberty he repels by lustily screaming and brandishing his table-knife, with a look and action worthy of an infant Hercules. He would swear, that urchin, if he could speak. Besides tumbling down the steps, he has an immense predilection for water, which evil passion led him vagabondising the other day into the street to the town fountain, where he was presently discovered with his head downwards, and his heels in the air, almost drowned. Great was the indignation of

Maria, who, administering a revivifying thump, held him by the heels in the air until all the water had escaped from his mouth, whereupon she brought him home crumpled up in her apron like a dead rabbit. But the next day he was valiantly fighting with the dogs, the geese, and the cocks and hens—the same devil-may-care little imp as ever!

Luigi, it must be owned, has a pleasant enough life of it with his little sister, whom he beats *à volonté*, unless when his young aunt Filomela (a tall, well-favoured lass who counts some fifteen summers, and carries loads of bricks on her head all day to the labourers below repairing the wall) chances to catch him in a quiet corner, when she fails not to administer her practical opinion of his conduct and principles with such emphatic arguments in the shape of blows as cause poor Luigi to wake the deepest echoes of the Rocca. A wicked little soul is Filomela, and quite up to any mischief.

But an agreeable holocaust to Luigi's feelings is shortly offered by Maria, who, rushing down at the noise, beats her sister in return, sending her off—with abundant objurgations—to carry bricks on her head.

Not to be forgotten is our landlady, the Sora Nena, a huge, bulky woman of some forty years old, who amuses her leisure by drinking the good *vino sincero* all day. This excellent lady is distinguished by a certain unsteadiness in her legs, and a misty, vague expression in her eyes, when (a gaudy handkerchief flying from her head) she descends into the yard to take the air after the sun has set. She generally grunts out a few inarticulate words, quite unintelligible to any one but the fowls and the disconsolate geese, which all flock around her in a joyous chorus, and jump on her head and shoulders—a delicate attention she rewards with some corn. She settles down finally near the hen-house door into a state of drowsy unconsciousness, and faintly calls at intervals for Rosa, her maid, who at length comes to fetch her home. Her husband, L——, the *nouveau riche*, is a study in his line. He began life as a shepherd, and either by finding a treasure on Monte Cavo, or egregiously cheating his employers, has made an immense fortune, bought lands and woods, flocks and herds, and become a *grand signore*, without the wildest notion of how to spend or to enjoy his money, except by grinding and oppressing the poor. He has skulked about in the woods for weeks, to escape being

murdered by those he has injured, dozens of men having sworn to take his life; as in the republican days of Roman freedom the patrician youth vowed to cut off their country's foe, the Etruscan Porsenna.

Such is the home circle in our *villeggiatura*. Outside is a street mounting up in an almost perpendicular line towards the topmost mass of rock, where a few ancient trees—scathed and worn by the winds of centuries—wave over the remnants of a fortress, once the property of the Orsini, but now a *feudo* of their deadliest enemies, the Colonna. Besieged and taken by the Duke of Calabria in 1484, and by the Caraffeschi and the Duke of Alba afterwards, this now desolate and remote ruin has often resounded to the thunder of artillery. The rock on which it stood was originally formed by vast deposits of lava from what was once a great volcano. The village is now perched on the outermost lip of the ancient crater; the ground, the banks, the rocks are all lava. Under the shadow of the mediæval citadel, the Duomo squeezes itself in on the top of the single street, its deep melodious clock giving time to the whole village, and reminding us, though *we* lie still and dream—pleasant dreams on distant mountain-tops—that the busy world still rushes

on, eager, feverish, impetuous; that death and joy, hatred and love, and every changing passion still rule the passing hour in that world stretched beneath our feet.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monte Cavo—Home Life—Maria—The Geese—The Dance—Marino,
and Gossip about its History—A Night at a Convent.

THE great sight of our savage fortress-home is Monte Cavo, which rises, as I have said, majestically behind the Rocca. Troops of visitors come daily through the chestnut forest to visit this highest summit of the Alban Mount. I was naturally all impatience until I also had addressed myself to the ascent. The road lay through the fair forests that over-mantled all around, save the grim sides of the Latin valley and the bleak heights of Tusculum. On I went by a rough track through that charmed wood, passing by clearings where those dusky squatters, the charcoal-burners, sit month after month by their smouldering fires, undermining the magnificent old trees spared by time from bygone centuries when Diana ruled the woods. On I go through parting walls of lava rock which rise like gigantic fortifications on either hand, the stone of a ruddy glowing colour,

warmed as it were by internal fires, and ever palpitating with a subdued heat. How grandly these ravines open—laced and embroidered with a rich undergrowth of vines, clematis, and wild roses, and diademed with sombre trees and shrubs! Grottoes yawn in the deep sides, leading down into unfathomable depths—perhaps to Tartarus and the ghastly circle where Lucifer sits enthroned amid blue fires. The merry light is subdued and oppressed in this mysterious pass, where eternal twilight reigns. After a time the defile terminates, and I emerge into light, and life, and sunshine, on an elevation above the Rocca. The ever-glorious prospect opens far and wide. Around me a valley, or rather plateau, appears, carpeted with the finest, greenest grass—a great space, perhaps four miles in circuit, bordered by low hills, bare and unwooded, suggesting bitter, piercing winds;—a strange, lonely region.

This plain, so singular in aspect, is said to have been the mouth of an ancient volcano. For that fact no one can vouch; nor does it matter. But it matters much to know that it was the camp of Hannibal, where that eccentric one-eyed hero encamped with his army during his memorable *scappata* from the South, when he hoped, by threatening the very gates of Rome, to create a

diversion in favour of Capua, then besieged by the Consuls. But the stern Romans budged not from Capua until the gates opened to receive them in triumph. Vainly did Hannibal sound his loud alarums in his camp on the Alban Hills—vainly did he, descending into the Campagna, entrench his forces on the Anio stream, three miles from imperial Rome, and skirmish with his swift-riding Numidians under the very walls. The Seven Hills heeded not—the Palladium shook not—the sacred fire burnt bright and clear, though the dreadful Carthaginian and his awful host glittered before the very eyes of the Quirites. The ground on which he stood was bought and sold in the Forum by those immovable men of brass, who knew that it was written Rome should stand as long as time endured. At the same moment a great army marched out of the opposite gates to Spain—far-off Spain—in mocking defiance, to show the Carthaginians that Rome had stout hearts and to spare, both to conquer the Pillars of Hercules, and to drive Hannibal back in shame from whence he came. Brave old Rome!

These recollections came vividly before me as I looked on the great field, formed by nature for an encampment, with its fringe of low hills, high enough for shelter, but too bare for ambuscades.



I thought on the day when Hannibal, gazing down on the Campagna and the Appian and Nomentana Ways stretching away towards the towers of Rome, saw them, as I did then, glistening in the sun. The great outlines are the same: there, in the distance, are the Street of Tombs, the Latin Valley, and rocky Tusculum; but the foreground is changed—I and my pony, instead of the Carthaginian host and the great conqueror that led them!

Before me rose Monte Cavo, a conical peak said to be three thousand feet above the neighbouring ocean—a lovely mountain, green and luxuriant as an English plaisance. The road winds up gently through the underwood and parting branches, until a purer air clothes all around with sheeny light. Here are no fierce rocks, no frowning precipices, no thundering streams or crashing avalanches—all is serenely lovely, rich and harmonious, as befits the smiling land beloved of Venus, where the Graces and the Muses still are worshipped. A turn of the road brought me suddenly face to face with a group of Passionist monks—pale, emaciated men—resting on some stones by the wayside. They had been down into the common world, and were now returning to their sky-parlour—the aërial monastery

aloft. Ascetics as they were, and weaned from all earthly things, these good monks, like true Italians, were full of courtesy. Their *abbate* hats were instantly raised as they perceived me, and a "*Buona passeggiata alla signora*" was uttered in dull, cold voices, wherein, though no mundane passions lingered, much that was kind and charitable was expressed.

As I wound round the mountain the panorama grew wider and grander. The sea, vast as eternity, outstretched into far-off fields of light and glory, melting dreamily into the vague clouds that float down to embrace it. There was old Tiber glittering across the Campagna, and the vast forest enshrouding the descending valleys, and the two sweet lakes reposing in their loveliness within umbrageous banks—that of Albano sad and solemn, ever mourning the majestic past; Nemi like a fairy-cup set in an emerald casing, so small and delicate that Titania might have borne it in the hollow of her hand, and carried it to fairy-land. Oh, the fair smiling lawns—the bonnie braes of velvet turf—the luxuriant fields of corn, like golden rivers winding amid the woods—the tufted knolls and parting rifts that opened before me! As the fleecy clouds came and went, and "waves of shadow" passed over the mighty landscape,





one might deem that some goddess was moving among the woods.

Now I have reached the old Roman kerbstones, that begin midway up the ascent, formed of great polygonal blocks, perfect and well preserved, the marks of the chariot-wheels still visible. And this, then, is truly and veritably the *Via Triumphalis*, and these stones are worn by the chariots of Rome's greatest generals, who went up to celebrate her triumphs at the Latin shrine! Here Julius Cæsar triumphed when named Dictator; and Marcellus, after his cruel siege of glorious Syracuse, when the beauty and the power of the fair Southern capital were crushed out for ever; and many other heroes whose deeds are chronicled on the classic page,—here they passed, coming from out of the great city and its pillared Forum. Many of the stones bear the letters V. N., still plainly visible, meaning *Via Numinis*. So I am fairly *en route* for heaven—even if it be a pagan one, still heaven—and I go on rejoicing; for my Pegasus (meaning my own individual Pegasus, not the quiet pony which, poor soul! cares for none of those things) gets exceedingly rampant at the very notion of mounting to the classic heavens, and meeting the whole circle of Olympus.

But mortals, though favoured with visions, are ever denied fruition. Oh, ye cruel gods! why entice me on this, your well-trodden pathway, and then suddenly break away and leave me? It was unkindly done.

Here I am actually at the summit on the broad platform, and lo! a white, ugly, staring monastery and a church—all so matter-of-fact that I feel quite unhappy. And a dog barks, and a man comes out and looks askance, and begs for *bajocchi*—all on the place where Cæsar, glittering in burnished armour, offered sacrifices for a thousand victories!

There is not a vestige of the past, not a sign to lead the mind back to the great feasts of the *Feriæ Latinæ*, when the forty-seven cities forming the Latin confederation met in solemn conclave. Here every consul came, before departing on foreign service, to celebrate the Latin games. Fabius Maximus, before advancing against Hannibal; and Publius Scipio, who afterwards vanquished his hosts; Marcellus, before proceeding to Syracuse; Titus Flaminus, before the conquest of Greece; Paulus Æmilius, before the Macedonian war; and Dentatus after his victory over Pyrrhus. Marcellus is especially remembered as triumphing first at Rome, and then receiving the lesser triumph

or ovation on the Alban Mount. In this ceremony the victorious general did not ride in a triumphal chariot—in fact, the narrow road was too steep to admit of the ascent of so ponderous a machine—nor was he crowned with laurel; neither had he trumpets sounding before him; but he mounted the Via Numinis in sandals, attended by musicians playing on a multitude of flutes, wearing a crown of myrtle, his aspect rather pleasing than formidable, and entirely divested of war's alarms. For the flute is an instrument dedicated to joyous measures in the "piping times of peace," and the myrtle is the tree of Venus, who, of all deities, is the most averse to war and violence. Indeed, the whole ceremony of the ovation has been referred to the festivals in honour of Bacchus rather than to those in honour of warlike affairs.

Not one stone remains of the glorious temple of Latian Jove, pillared on a thousand marble columns, which once crowned the Alban Mount. Cardinal York, Vandal as he was, has taken care of that, and removed everything tending to lead the mind of his Passionist monks back to pagan times. There is but one solitary bit of ancient wall, out of which grows a wide-spreading beech tree, old enough to have presided over the mys-

teries of Cybele, or to have looked on when Saturnian Juno descended from her starry throne to survey the battle-field where the armies of the Laurentines and Trojans stood forth in bright array.

Then I turned and beheld the goodly lands of Latium, a fair and pleasant prospect, where the whole *locale* of the *Æneid* is visible:—Cività Lavinia, once the Pelasgic Lanuvium, seated on its pleasant hill, the birthplace of Milo, and of Roscius and the three Antonines; Ostia, where the Trojan ships first touched the Ausonian strand; Antium, now Porto d'Anzio, once a Volscian city on the Tyrrhene Sea, where Coriolanus, “standing in the palace of his enemy, vowed eternal vengeance against his ungrateful country,” where Nero was born, and from whose ruins in after ages the Belvidere Apollo emerged to astonish the artistic world; ancient Corioli, now Monte Giove, whence Coriolanus, heading the Volscian legions, marched against Rome; Pratica, once Lavinium, founded by *Æneas* in honour of his wife, the modest Lavinia, whose blushes, celebrated by Virgil, were “as if one had stained the Indian ivory with clouded purple, or as the white lilies mingled with copious roses;” Ardea, the Argive capital of Turnus and his Rutulians, whose walls,



once stormed by Tarquinius Superbus, were afterwards hallowed by sheltering the exiled but heroic Camillus, who departed hence bearing the proud title of Dictator, conferred on him by repentant Rome; Etruscan Cære, once a city of the Pelasgi, but named Cære by the Lydians of the Etruscan League, whither the Vestal virgins fled, bearing the sacred fire, when the Gauls conquered Rome; Tusculum, proudly seated on its rocky heights, sometimes the rival, but often the ally, of infant Rome, a place of fabulous antiquity, whose huge Pelasgic walls withstood the attack of Hannibal, but fell a sacrifice to the miserable feuds of the middle ages; near at hand Frascati, sprung from Tusculum's ruins; and Albano, the modern representative of Alba Longa, "the Long White City;" and domed Castello, with its castellated palace and its azure lake; and many a pleasant city among the Sabine Hills, where also Tivoli, the ancient Tibur, the home of Horace, Catullus, and Propertius, appears embosomed and belted with olive woods. Further on, Monte Soracte towers in solitary majesty—Soracte, on whose summit once stood Apollo's golden temple; and Monte Cimino, leading on towards ancient Etruria and the Ligurian lands. In the centre of the plain lies Rome, girded with the walls of Aure-

lius, no longer the luxurious capital of the Cæsars, but consecrated to the service of that religion whose noblest temple here lifts its gigantic dome against the heavens. All Italy does not boast a braver view! Would that I could fitly describe and unfold the mysteries of the classical hieroglyphics spread around! But it is given to me only to come on a humble pony, not mounted on a living Pegasus, and I can but paint in dull prose what I saw, and how I saw it.

The platform on which the temple stood—where were celebrated the Latin games instituted by Tarquinius Superbus every year at the beginning of May, the consuls and other chief magistrates going forth in procession from the city—is now occupied by a garden, where apples and cabbages grow and ripen on the soil once so fertile in Roman laurels. No woman can enter, for the Passionist order eschews us as the parents of evil and of sin; and where amorous Jupiter once ruled no woman may approach. Strange metamorphosis! But there is an outside path running round the garden wall, constructed of massive blocks of stone, spoils of the ancient temple; and through the overarching branches of a sacred grove that yet fringes this path on the crest of the summit are disclosed glimpses of mountains, valleys, hills, ravines, all

solitary and uninhabited, tossed about in chaotic confusion, a green wilderness without form and void, melting into the purple masses of the Abruzzi, whose lofty peaks shut in the prospect. And then the sea peeps out again near the rock of Terracina, that beauteous portal to the land of Græcia Magna, distinctly visible in the far distance; and the small islets of Palmaria and Pandaria lie like dots on the blue ocean.

One more long look towards the great city and I am gone; for see! the sun, a ball of liquid fire, is sinking beneath banks of purple clouds, the sound of the *Ave Maria* rises from the church of the Rocca below, and the stars are coming out one by one.

* * * * *

Maria told me to look out of the window this morning, and I saw that the ground before the opposite house was strewn with rose-leaves.

"*Cosa significa?*" said I to the jolly *donna di facenda* (housekeeper) who stood beside me, bridling and looking full of mystery.

"*Significa l'amore,*" replied she. "*L'amore, il bel amore.*" And she sighed and looked sad for an instant, and remembered her rage and jealousy, and how she sewed up the unfortunate *peccatore*, her *sposa*, in the sheets.

“*Ma*,” said I again, “*che cosa significa?*”

“*Ascolta*,” said she. “Opposite lives the baker Pietro, he that wears the red cap. Well, he has long loved the daughter of Fondi, the pretty Teresina; but her parents said she was too young, and sent her for education to a convent for a year. To-day she is seventeen, and she has returned, and Pietro has strewed the rose-leaves before her door to declare his passion. *E un certo modo nostro*. He has strewed the rose-leaves: if they are removed, ’tis a sign she refuses his suit; but if they remain, why, *certo*, she accepts him. Ah! Teresina will not sweep away the rose-leaves, *ne son sicura*. They may fade, but her love for Pietro, and Pietro’s love for her, will only bloom and blossom as time goes on. Once it was so for me, and rose-leaves were strewed before my door in the grey morning light—red rose-leaves, to show the fervour of his passion. When I went out at sunrise to draw the water, I stepped on them; and when he saw I smiled, and gathered some into my bosom—for he was hid behind a *portone* watching me—he came forth and kissed me, and asked me to be his wife. But it is all changed now. *Tempo passato non ci penso più!* But still—*che bella cosa è l’amore*—I could have loved long, yes, and borne much, *Iddio lo sa*; but——”

She pointed to the fresh rose-leaves, and tears sprang into her bright eyes. "There will be a serenade to-night," continued she, wiping away her tears with the back of her hand. "Two guitars will play sweetly before Teresina's door when the moon rises, and she will come out on the balcony to show Pietro that she is pleased and accepts his suit. Oh, *che bella cosa è l'amore e la gioventù!*"

I must introduce some more of the characters of our Rock perched up so high near the Via Numinis. We almost forget we have any relation at all with *terra firma*, and are inclined to try an excursion on the ambient air; but, although this heavenly altitude affects me with uncontrollable fits of longing to be off and away into the land of ideality, the rest living up here are of the earth earthly. The Contessa below thinks only of her knight—he of the Guardia Nobile, who dutifully comes, trotting on a donkey from Frascati, to visit the deploring fair—when he has spent all his money, *bien compris!* A little niece, some sixteen summers old, has arrived from a convent to visit her aunt. I wonder what she thinks of things in general, and how she will describe her aunt's *ménage* to the pious Sisters! Talk of Italian ladies' progress in virtue—oh, *miserere!* the sun shall stand still in the heavens, truth shall become a

liar, the Ethiopian cast his sable skin, before Italians learn to practise virtue!

Then there are the geese—ah! they are far more interesting than the marchesa and her superannuated loves. Their fate is a *real* tragedy—those unhappy birds which wandered for years up and down in search of that “something unpossessed” (viz., a mossy pond, such as is seen in a shady English lane, under thick hedgerows), but, withal, quiet and uncomplaining as they increased and multiplied. They are all dead as ducats! It fell out in this wise. The Padrona Nena—she who sacrifices each afternoon on her domestic altars to the jolly Bacchus god—in a drunken frolic descended with her three attendant Furies, or rather Fates. They seized the devoted birds quietly reposing on the grass, and cast them headlong into a pool of water used to irrigate the garden—a high walled-up place, from which there was no escape. There they left them, laughing and yelling like evil spirits at the frolic. The geese, unaccustomed to the cold of the chill, unwholesome tank, struggled to escape; plaintively they cackled, and beat their snowy wings with dumb and piteous pleadings; but in vain—their fate was sealed. No more the bright August sun would shine for them—no more would they peck

the moist scented grasses under the wide chestnut trees—no more rest under the pleasant vine-arbour in the garden where they were first freed from the encircling egg. Clotho had drawn their brief thread of life, Lachesis had turned the wheel, and Atropos, with her fell scissors, cut the slender thread. The poor geese all died a melancholy death in the cold tank. But they died not unlamented, for their misfortunes caused such dolorous sympathy among the children, that after shedding those bitter tears that any strong and sudden grief so readily calls to the eyes of infancy—after wreathing and garlanding the poor white-feathered corpses with flowers—they buried them under a solitary rose-bush in the garden.

But away with melancholy—it befits not our cloud-home. Yesterday was a festa; the church bells rang a merry peal; little cannons exploded from the top of the rock; and squibs and crackers woke the classic echoes of Jove's ruined shrine. The contadine appeared in their snowy head-dresses, coral beads, and crimson bodices, and said their prayers to the Madonna del Tufo (of the Rock); and then a party of laughing maidens came to dance the *tarantella* in our rooms. Glee-some, jolly maidens these, their girlish forms already rounding into voluptuous womanhood.

Timidly they came at first, one by one, with a rough curtsey, and a "*Buon giorno, signora,*" and sat down crimson with blushes. But when Elena, the fair-haired daughter of the *speziale*, struck the tambourine with a grace worthy of Terpsichore herself, and sent out the lusty whirring sounds that the excitable Italians love so well, and little Giuletta, who had brought an harmonicon, accompanied her with some simple notes, then the bright-eyed girls came pressing through the door, all anxious to dance before the signora. They began—Carolina with Michelletta, sounding the merry castanets, and describing rapid circles round each other—now near, now distant—now accepted, now rejected—till at last Carolina kneels, and her partner dances round her in triumph. 'Twas a pity such eloquent dancing should have been wasted on a girl!

After the dancing had fairly begun, the tambourine passed from hand to hand, and many a graceful measure was threaded. Maria danced fast and furiously for awhile, as became her passionate nature, and stamped on the floor, and flew round and round with vehement energy; then, as if a vision of the past had suddenly appeared before her, she covered her face with her hands and rushed out. "*Povera Maria,*" said

her forsaken partner, "*ha molto sofferta.*" The miller's love came too—she before whose door the roses were strewn—looking conscious and happy, a trifle reserved, perhaps. She sat in a corner and arranged her head-dress, and smoothed her hair, thinking doubtless of the miller, and of all the pleasant things he said.

After the dance they partook of wine—good *vino sincero* of Genzano, sweet and creamy, like champagne—and of *salame* and cakes; each coming to thank the signora for her *gran bontà*, and to wish her all kinds of felicity. And then the merry girls ran off; and then the tambourine was heard in the street; and then it sounded fainter and fainter as they ascended the hill, until distance bore away the sound, and all was silent.

Marino, surrounded by castellated walls and towers, picturesquely situated on a rocky height overlooking the Campagna, is a place I love to visit—a cosy, happy-looking spot, little suggestive in its aspect of the dark reputation it bears of being in its collective capacity extraordinarily addicted to the use of the stiletto. There is a mediæval look about the town that fascinates me. Here an old wall pushes forward, forcing its way through the modern buildings; there an old gateway, flanked by tottering "towers of other days,"

leads, perchance, up a lonely lane, where, if you value your skin, you would do well not to venture alone after the *Ave Maria*—that pathetic twilight hour the *assassini* love so well. Whenever you hear of a robbery or a murder, it is sure to have taken place about the *Ave Maria*. The *sgrasatore* offers up his hasty prayer to the Virgin, fumbles over his *corona* (for they are all wildly superstitious), and, thus fortified, plants himself, musket in hand, under the shadow of some high bridge, or clump of trees, or dark *portone*, from whence he can take a deliberate aim at your head, unless you will freely consent to make your *meum* his *tuum* else——Heaven and all its saints have mercy on your soul!

Marino can boast broad handsome streets, where the soft summer breezes have free leave to palpitate. There is a pretty piazza, with an antique fountain rich in gods and nymphs, somewhat coated and obscured by moss, but still, even in their fallen condition, attractive. There is a fine mediæval palazzo, looking down with dignified scorn on the surrounding houses. And there is a duomo with a handsome architectural façade; to say nothing of scores of pretty women wearing long white veils. No wonder the town looks mediæval, for its history is a rare old chronicle of

the feudal times. Volumes might be written of all the fights, sieges, and battles fought under its tottering walls. It was originally called *Castri-mænium*, and is mentioned by Pliny—whether favourably or not, in regard to its acknowledged fighting and cut-throat character, I have no means of ascertaining. Then it afterwards became a stronghold of the Orsini family—those powerful barons whose ceaseless hereditary feuds with the rival house of the Colonna so often crimsoned the streets of Rome with blood. Marino was to the Orsini a mountain stronghold and an impregnable fortress, from whence they could defy the thunders of the Vatican (then weakened by distance, for the terrified popes had fled into France), or the attacks of their hated rivals. In those days the walls were manned with stout German mercenaries belonging to the great companies of free-lances, more odious to the Italians than the devil himself,—days so black, and dreary, and heavy with crime, one wonders how the miserable old world contrived to outlive them.

When a ray of light penetrated this opaque gloom, it was in the person of Rienzi, that eccentric but generous-hearted patriot, who so loved the great city which gave him birth that he endeavoured to revivify her wasted energies, and

plant about her dying trunk the fresh soil of freedom. In this noble attempt to revive "the good estate" Rienzi was bitterly opposed by the blood-thirsty Roman barons, who, like foul and savage beasts, batten on the general slaughter. The Orsini, most savage and remorseless of all, were his bitterest enemies. Giordano Orsini, expelled from Rome as a traitor to all law and order, retired to the fortress of Marino, where he was besieged by Rienzi, but the Bear of the Orsini prevailed, and Rienzi was driven back.

In the following century, amid the chances and changes of war, Marino passed into the possession of the Colonna, who at last, after having sacrificed thousands of lives, and spread misery and annihilation around, conquered their ancient foes. "Revenge and the Colonna!" was now the cry. "The Bear" was forgotten, or only remembered on some old frieze, or capital, or painted sign, which the rival house had not cared to obliterate.

Many times subsequently the possession of this stronghold was disputed. Once it was besieged by Ricci, Archbishop of Pisa, one of those warlike prelates who loved plated armour better than sacerdotal robe, embroidered cope, or cup

and chalice. Again the stout fortress was attacked by Sixtus IV. But the Colonna, determined not to lose so valuable a retreat, fortified it anew with massive walls and strong towers whose ruins still remain, though overgrown by umbrageous trees and waving shrubs, which hang over the lovely valley below—a valley so narrow, so deep, so mysterious, so belted and darkened by woods, that before descending a very precipitous hill, and actually treading its cool recesses, one would never dream that it existed at all. Oh! the romantic, solitary dell, surrounded by hills broken into rocky ravines and dark fissures, all of the same ruddy sunburnt tint as the bare rocks on which the town is built. Great overarching trees of living oak, a bubbling stream that sparkles through the grass, and thick underwood mantling the hillsides unite to make it a place to dream of—cool, murmuring, delicious, while the surrounding lands are baked by the fervid sun. There is a gate beside a fountain that bursts splashing out of a wall, leading up through an overarched walk of willows to the deepest part of the glen. This is the Parco di Colonna, a labyrinth of loveliness, leading on under red rocks through wooded braes, and by lawns sown with pink and white cyclamens. After following

this beauteous ravine for some time, a bluff face of tufa rock, overmantled with arbutus and acanthus plants, shuts in the path, out of whose sides the presiding deity of the cool valley, a sparkling stream, gushes forth, and falls into two shallow circular reservoirs or basins. I am particular in describing the aspect of this spot, for the valley—which I would have you admire as much as I do—has a history—an ancient, time-worn history—chronicled by old Livy himself. The same rocks that shelter us, perhaps the ancient oaks and sombre ilex trees under which I stand, and this brawling stream, rushing from the silent woods to career in light and sunshine beyond, saw the Latin tribes assemble on the day that proud Alba could no longer shelter the confederate nations within her stately palaces. The forty-seven tribes that formed the strength of infant Rome held their triumphant festivities on the Alban Mount, whose summit tops the distant prospect, and met for deliberation in this valley—beside this stream called the Acqua Ferentina—where, under the leafy canopy, they sat in common conclave.

On a certain day, when kings ruled the seven hills of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius issued orders that the Latin chiefs should assemble at the grove

of Ferentina, to confer on some matters of common concern. They came accordingly in great numbers at the dawn of day, but Tarquinius delayed making his appearance until sunset. Meanwhile, the news of the day, and various topics of general interest, were discussed by the assembled chiefs as they sat by the banks of the stream awaiting the arrival of Tarquinius, who, in thus disregarding his appointment, taught all men that he was with reason called "the Proud." Turnus Herdonius, the chief of Aricia, was loud in his complaints against Tarquinius, and eloquently resented the affront put on them all by his absence. "It was no wonder," said he, "that the surname of 'Proud' had been given him at Rome. Could any greater instance of pride be given than by thus trifling with all the nations of the Latins, after their chiefs had come so great a distance in obedience to his summons? He surely must be making trial of their patience, intending, if they submitted, utterly to crush them, for it was plain by such conduct he aimed at universal sovereignty."

This and much more was spoken by Turnus of Aricia. While he was haranguing the people, Tarquin himself appeared, and every one then turned from Turnus to salute Tarquinius, who was

surrounded by his lictors and attendants—a pompous train befitting so powerful a king. Standing forth in the grove, he apologised to the chiefs for his remissness, saying “that he was obliged to remain in Rome, having been chosen umpire between a father and son;” which when Turnus understood, he was heard to mutter, “That there was no controversy between a father and son that ought not to be terminated in a few words, for that a rebellious son should suffer the consequences of his rebellion.” Indeed, Turnus continued so indignant at the slight put upon the chiefs, that he retired from the assembly, leaving the rest in consultation with Tarquinius.

Now this latter was highly incensed at seeing Turnus retire into the woods, where temporary lodgings had been prepared for the chiefs; so, being a bad and wicked man, and fresh from the murder of his father-in-law, he determined to have his life. In order to affect this purpose, he bribed some Aricians to convey a quantity of swords privately into Turnus’s lodgings during the course of the night; then, a little before sunrise, he caused the other chiefs to be summoned in great haste, as if he had been alarmed by some extraordinary event, exclaiming, as they entered, “That his accidental delay of yesterday was surely

owing to the favour of the gods, since it had been the means of preserving him and them from destruction, for that he had been assured that Turnus of Aricia had formed a conspiracy to murder them all, that he alone might rule over Latium. He was told, indeed," he artfully continued, "that a vast number of swords had been privately conveyed to his lodging: therefore he requested all the chiefs to accompany him at once, and see if the report were true." There was a great commotion among the chiefs as they listened to what Tarquin said, and they ultimately followed him to that part of the wood where Turnus lay asleep, surrounded by his guards. His servants, observing the menacing aspect of the chiefs, prepared, out of affection to their master, to oppose their approach: but, being few in number, they were soon secured, and the swords which Tarquinius had caused to be concealed were drawn forth from every part of the lodging. Then Turnus was loaded with chains, and an assembly of the chiefs being called, and the swords brought down and laid in the midst, their fury became so ungovernable that they would not even allow him to speak in his own defence, but at once commanded that he should be thrown into the reservoir of the Acqua Ferentina—*Caput Aquæ Ferentinæ*—where

a hurdle was placed over him, and upon the hurdle a heap of stones; and so he was drowned.

Extraordinary to say, after the lapse of so many centuries, Ferentina still remains precisely in its original state, being the bluff face of rock I have so particularly described, from whence the stream flows into a circular reservoir, much too shallow, indeed, to drown a man, unless he were pressed down by absolute force.

S. W—— came up the other day to pay us a visit from imperial Rome. (I feel such respect and love for the dear old city, I can never mention it without qualifying it with a majestic adjective.) Well, S. W—— came up, and underwent quite a chapter of accidents. The horse sent to meet him, being occasionally troubled by an affection of the fore-leg, was attacked with this chronic complaint on the road, and, without the slightest intimation of his intention (which, considering the circumstances, would only have been polite), dropped poor S. W—— on a heap of stones. S. W——, bruised, astonished, and indignant, refused to mount the treacherous quadruped any more, and addressed himself to the journey on foot. But as the mountain road through the *macchia* is as difficult as the road to paradise,

when he arrived, what with the fatigue, and the heat, and the bruises, he was inconsolable.

The next morning it rained an Italian deluge, notwithstanding which S. W—— would ride (on another horse) through the forest, now damp as a sponge after the recent moisture. We told him he would have a return of the Roman fever; but our counsel was in vain. Off he went, and on again came the rain—a respectable waterspout. Hours flew by; the rain continued; but no S. W—— appeared—so we supposed some of the elderly English maidens abounding at L'Ariccia had taken compassion on him and housed him. Not a bit of it. Up comes a little pencil-note, saying he had taken refuge at Palazzuola, a romantic convent on the shores of the Alban Lake, and was so happy with the Franciscan monks, he didn't intend to return till the next morning. When he came back he told us all about it.

The rain driving him in, and an ominous fit of shivering supervening, the good monks were full of compassion. He was installed in the great *sala* looking out over the mysterious lake from a window with a balcony "*alla Giuglietta*." This room, grand and spacious as a feudal hall, was lined with pictures of founders, benefactors, popes,

and saints—all good and holy men, whose images seemed to sanctify the solemn *sala*.

Then they took S. W—— through long corridors lined with cells and dormitories on either hand (each bed with its little crucifix lying demurely on the sheet) down into a beautiful garden, “quite,” as he said, “unreal and enchanted-looking, like fairy-land.” The cypress, “the Virgin’s tree,” that points towards heaven, grew there in thick, tangled masses: and ilex trees, and fresh oaks, and sycamores. Long broad walks stretched across the formal grass-plots, by ruined fountains where pale lilies grew, to shady groves beyond. On one side the garden was enclosed by mediæval walls (the place is more like a fortress than a monastery even now), castellated and turreted, and carved in quaint devices, with heavy stanchions and buttresses overhanging the trackless woods that are mirrored on the bosom of the sleeping lake.

Well, on the opposite side of that antique garden, along whose front ran a lordly terrace, uprose the solemn rocks on which the building stood, moss-grown and grey with the hoary dew of centuries. There they lay, rifted and ravined, and broken into fantastic glens and crevices—here a yawning cavern, going no one could guess

where; there a hole, as deep as Malabolge; further on, a deep, deep rift, bottomless as the everlasting pit. Such was the garden as S. W—— described it, with the sedate friars creeping noiselessly about, their black robes, and monkish cowls, sandalled feet and hempen girdles, harmonising, like a chord of sweet music, with the impressive aspect of that fair, sad scene.

There was no end to the *gentilezze* of these worthy Franciscans, who, after walking him all round and about through the vine *pergole* and up among the leafy arbours in the rock, showed him over the establishment, the stables, the bakehouse, where a lay brother was up to the elbows kneading flour; the kitchen where another cowed monk was labouring among the frizzling spits, and pots, and pans; even to the savage dog that kept the gate. Then he saw the church, where they daily sang their psalms of love and praise; and, in fact, everything—ecclesiastic, mundane, domestic, romantic, feudal—in this forest-home and convent-fortress.

When supper was ready, the monks, twelve in number, assembled in the refectory, where stood six little tables, each table being laid for two persons; in the centre were bread and a bottle of

padronale wine. The superior took his station at the top of the room—an eagle-eyed, sharp-featured man in spectacles, who had an inveterate habit of putting away everything into the overhanging folds of his right sleeve. At his little table was seated a friar from Assisi on a visit—a personage of importance; for, although the Franciscans are a begging order and ought to possess nothing, all the monks at Assisi are gentlemen and *possidenti*, and, as such, are much regarded by their poorer brethren. When the superior had pronounced a *benedicite* and blessed the tables, and the monks had crossed and blessed themselves, the *cena* was brought in by the lay-brethren—humble, servile fellows of the “Friar Tuck” pattern, red-cheeked, jolly, cunning-looking, and withal orthodoxly smelly and dirty. These lay-brethren, never having been ordained priests like the other monks, form the ecclesiastic *profanum vulgus*. A priest is a gentleman, though penniless, because he *is* a priest, and can celebrate mass and offer the blessed sacrifice; but these—they are the *oi pollio*. Well—speaking after S. W——, for no woman, under pain of the most horrible excommunications, can enter these doors—the *cena*, consisting of *minestra* (broth), *frittura*, or omelette, salad, roasted quails, fat and luscious, shot by Fra Felice in the wood,

and fish netted by Fra Giacomo in the classic lake, was admirably washed down by wine—and *such* wine! Ye heathen gods! had ye then left behind a sample of Bacchus's sparkling cup when ye fled from these your native wilds? S. W—— got quite enthusiastic about the wine, I assure you; and said the monks, though moderate, seemed to enjoy and value its fine flavour. One *frate*, entering after the *benedicite*, kneeled on the floor before the superior, with his hands clasped; the superior hotly engaged in an argument with the *possidente* from Assisi, did not perceive him; so there he knelt motionless, looking like a penitent ghost come to be shriven, until at length the superior saw him, and made the sign of the cross over him, when the *frate* took his allotted place.

After supper all the community assembled in the noble *sala*, the setting sun lighting up the old walls in a glowing haze. Beyond, over the sea and the Campagna, bands of gold and purple clouds shone for awhile; then the blue hills melted into grey, and the gloomy mountains darkened into black. The window was closed, the *lucerna* appeared, cards were brought out, and the monks played *una partita* with the well-thumbed packs which had afforded amusement to many a generation of tonsured friars. At length, when night

was come, they made up a bed for S. W—in the great *sala*, where he slept soundly, under the custody of those stern old images looking down from the walls—the guardian angels of the place.

CHAPTER IX.

A Hot Day in Rome—Sunsets—The Tramontana—Classical Recollections of Albano and Castello—The Festa of the Madonna del Tufo—Characters.

PEOPLE have an idea that the Italians are becoming more civilised and eschewing the use of the stiletto; that a Bravo is a chimerical animal only existing in Cooper's romance; that wives are virtuous, husbands faithful, and cicisbeism quite out of date and altogether ungenteeled. All these charitable surmises are mistakes—I could recount various anecdotes proving the truth of what I say—but as to the murdering part, listen. There was a day last week in Rome of intense heat. I suppose this state of the atmosphere occasioned a moral delirium, for many who rose that morning blithe and gay, lay down before night on mother earth never to rise again. There was a madness abroad that day for certain.

S. W—— and a friend were refreshing the outward and inner man by a siesta at Nazzari's

and an ice, when their attention was attracted by much running to and fro, loud talking, swearing, and tumult—a general excitement, in fact, all tending towards the Via Babuino. They joined the crowd, and heard that an *assassino* had been committed in broad daylight, and that the corpse lay there. Pressing forward, they saw extended on the stones, quite dead, a lovely girl weltering in her blood, with a deadly wound in her side. They at once recognised her as a well-known model, renowned for her beauty and grace. There she lay, pale and bloody, on the cold stones, until some of the brothers of the Misericordia came (they that wear the black masks and long dark robes, and look more like mummies than men) and composed her limbs, and, laying her in a great sheet, carried her away. She had been walking with *un certo amico*, it seems, in the Via Babuino, when her husband passed. His ire was kindled, his jealousy aroused; he drew his stiletto and slaughtered her there on the spot where she stood; then ran away. But the *certo amico*, her *cavaliere*, ran after him, and watched and dodged him into a certain house; and when in the evening he came out, the said *amico*, having his stiletto ready hid in the sleeve of his coat, struck him down then and there, and left him lying weltering

in his blood as she had lain. Whether this valiant lover escaped or not I cannot say.

That same day a man was passing in a cart through the Piazza Barberini, where Bernini's classic fountain plays in the sun. Some one crossed his path, and, being nearly run over by the *carettino*, gave the horse a blow with a stick. No word was spoken; but the *carettiére* stopped his cart, descended, deliberately drew his stiletto, and stabbed the man dead; then, remounting, drove away. So much for the effects of a hot day in Rome.

We have had a series of the most magnificent sunsets imaginable. Sometimes great bands of purple and gold clasp the broad horizon in gorgeous girdles, the gold melting into the ocean in fields of glistening fire, or flaming here and there upon a distant mountain-peak, all Nature lying dark and black as a pall—a fitting foreground for this brilliant sight. Sometimes the whole heavens seem on fire—a terrible conflagration prefiguring that awful End when the earth and all that it contains shall be consumed with fervent heat. I have almost trembled as, standing under the *pergola* in our garden, I have watched the awful scene, too horribly beautiful to contemplate with aught but dread. Golden clouds, dissolving into crimson,

saffron, and scarlet, lay quivering and palpitating as in an atmosphere of ardent fire, save when here and there sombre masses of purple, tipped with the prevailing fire tint, bore storms and thunders in their deep bosoms. Anon the parting clouds opened into cavernous recesses of inmost glory, and the sun, an orb of liquid fire, glowed out "stern as the unlashèd eye of God." For awhile it glowed in infinite light, irradiating the sad Campagna with a wild, unearthly hue; then, dipping into the encircling sea, it slowly vanished, deep shadows fell fast around, and the sullen, purple, massed-up clouds turned into banks of sombre lead colour. I have seen the sky at other times completely covered with a network of purple and gold, with here and there touches and tinges as of fire, while between the parting rifts pale blue sky peeped softly out; and I have seen the vaulted firmament of a sweet heavenly blue, as it may have looked when God beheld his labour and pronounced it good.

Then, after the sunsets, came a mighty wind, the Tramontana, down from the icy North, passing across the snowy summits of the everlasting Alps, and bearing in its breath biting frosts from their glacier bosoms—a furious wind that tore and rent the gigantic trees, wrenched the

mantling leaves in showers from the bending boughs and thundered among the rocky caverns of our hills like a torrent of invisible avalanches.

How that Tramontana wind roared and whistled about our mountain home! How it raged up at Monte Cavo! Heaven help the poor monks! They must have trembled in their beds, and said many an *Ave* in their fear. How it yelled among the tottering ruins of Tusculum, and bent and twisted the grand old pine trees that diadem its sloping woods around Cicero's ruined portico! The motionless waters of the Alban Lake swayed to and fro this wild and dreary night — those mystic waters that never listen to the enticing breath of fragrant summer. Even Nemi, too, Diana's mirror, must have lashed its wooded sides under the influence of such a hurricane.

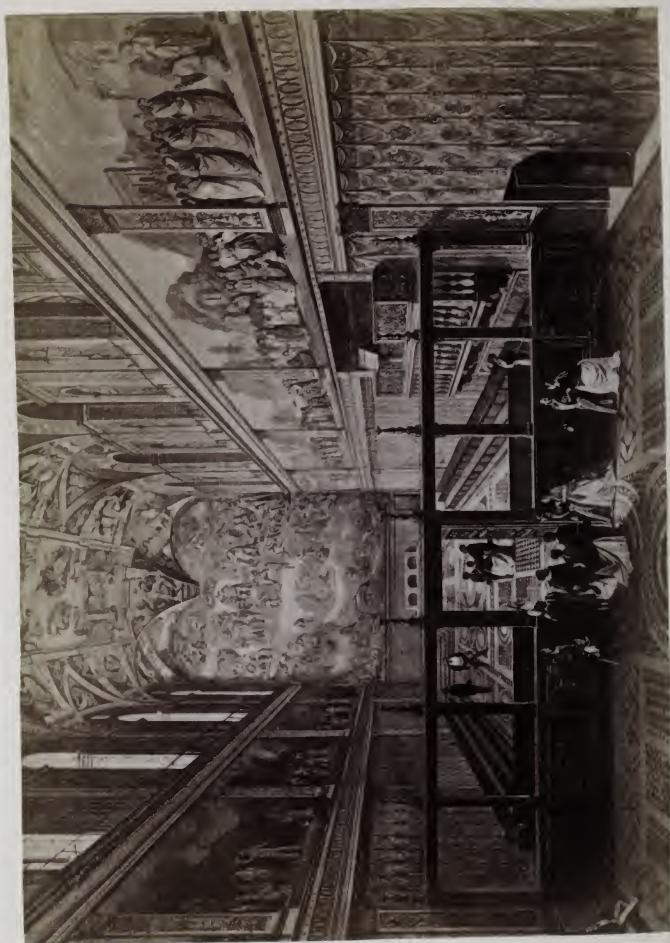
I thought of all this sitting beside the blazing wood fire on our own cheerful hearth, while the storm raged remorselessly without. It is delightful to sit and listen to the shrill whistling of the gale; to watch the shadows on the wall as the fire flickers. There is an exquisite sense of luxury and domestic peace and household security at such a time. There I sat; and I questioned the wind as it swept up from the far North, of many things. I asked it of a certain corner in a certain

room which it used to love of yore, in the spring-time, when its breath came perfumed with the year's young flowers; and the answering wind, always loud and shrill, told me that strangers dwelt there now, and that since the days of my joyous girlhood none had cared to hearken to its constant sighs in that familiar room. "Ah, wind!" cried I, "but you were false, for there you prophesied such pleasant things."

I have endeavoured to describe the classic valley of Marino. An ascending road through a magnificent wood leads from the Acqua Ferentina towards Castello and Albano. On emerging from the wood the Alban Lake bursts on the sight, its sullen waters unruffled by a wave. In front, Monte Cavo rises majestically towards those clouds to which its Via Numinis professes to lead. To the right Castel Gondolfo stands on a grand natural platform overlooking the lake, quite embosomed in dark poetic woods. I have already said that the shores of this lake are strewn with ruins, the foundations of former nymphæums and grottoes, while pillars, marbles, and mosaics are perpetually found among the surrounding woods.

The grandest of the imperial villas was that erected by Domitian on the spot now occupied by the Villa Rospigliosi, near Castel Gondolfo.





To-day I rode all over this district, and, finding the gates of the villa invitingly open, I entered the gardens, which occupy the fall of the hill between Castel Gondolfo and Albano. Long avenues of ilex trees terminate in lovely vistas over the Campagna, melting away in blue distance towards the sea, and are here and there diversified by groups of antique statues, vases, and pillars wreathed with vine and clematis. The Rospigliosi gardens boast a terrace-walk more than a mile in length, entirely formed by overarching ilex trees—a majestic avenue, fit only to be trodden by the great ones of the earth. Midway along this ilex avenue are the ruins of Domitian's palace—indistinct masses of wall, without form and void, and wholly overgrown by ivy and other plants.

Standing before those misshapen ruins, it seemed scarcely possible to call forth a vision of the palace erected by that deified monster whose reign disgraced the annals of the Flavian line; yet on this spot, and descending towards the lake, stood one of the loftiest piles that even antiquity can boast. Here were magnificent atriums; great vestibules; halls of almost fabulous extent, supported by columns of the rarest coloured marbles, and adorned with Grecian statues; ceilings and walls painted in brilliant fresco that harmonised

in colour with the patterns on the mosaic floors, and were supported by cornices of silver or of gold; temples glittering with gilded plates; marble colonnades stretching through the surrounding groves; fountains of perfumed waters springing from parterres of brilliant flowers; Odeons for music and song; vast baths, where, under gilded roofs upheld by crystal columns, the cool water flowed into alabaster reservoirs; magnificent porticoes, leading by flights of steps down to the lake, where, beside the deep waters, grottoes and caves, decorated as tricliniums and nymphæums, were dedicated to the water-nymphs, the presiding deities of these enchanting shores.

But the circus and the amphitheatre attached to the palace were most frequented by Domitian himself. Here he was constantly present, wearing a golden crown and robes of purple, and surrounded by the priests of Jupiter and the Flavian College. Not only men but women exhibited themselves in the gladiatorial games, and ran races at night under the glare of the torches with which the amphitheatre was illuminated. Even torrents of rain did not deter Domitian from remaining until the conclusion; he himself frequently changed his clothes, but a positive law forbade the audience to leave their seats. The Lake of

Albano afforded an admirable *locale* for the naval battles in which he also delighted. Suetonius tells us that he regularly celebrated the festival of Minerva here, for which purpose he established a college of priests on the Alban Mount.

Born with a mean and cowardly nature, Domitian, conscious of the hatred he excited, trembled at his own shadow, unless surrounded by his guards. We are told that he daily shut himself up alone in the interior of his palace, for the purpose of killing flies with a gold bodkin! Sometimes when visiting his Alban villa, these hours of solitude were passed in wandering through the columned arcades, where, on the walls, constructed of a peculiar marble capable of bearing the highest polish, he could perceive as he walked the shadow of any one approaching from behind. Haunted throughout his life by a constant terror of assassination, his cowardly fears drove him to acts of horrid cruelty. One courtier was murdered because he was born under a star promising imperial power; another, because he carried about with him a map of the world; another, because he had invented a lance of a new shape. Cunning and dissembling as he was cruel and remorseless, Domitian began by caressing those whom he intended to destroy; but his honeyed phrases soon

became sentences of death, and those who sat beside him at the same couch, and eat of the same dish, were often, after a courteous reception, ordered out to instant execution. Naturally of a robust constitution, his monstrous excesses so wasted his strength that his hair fell from his head, his legs shrunk, his body swelled, and he became so incapable of all fatigue that he was generally carried about in a litter. The only manly exercise in which he delighted was archery. It is related that when passing the summer months in these delightful solitudes, the quantity of wild beasts he shot was quite incredible. So skilful was he in the use of the bow, that taking a little slave for his mark, he would shoot arrows through every finger of his upraised hand without so much as grazing the skin.

Such was the emperor who inhabited the walls under which I have been standing. Surrounded by all the splendour, riches, luxuries, and amusements that the empire of the world could bestow, he lived a trembling, suspicious wretch, incapable of enjoying the present, and tormented by dreary presentiments of the future. A haunting gloom seems yet to linger around the dark trees whose branches wave over the scattered ruins; a curse, heavy and palpable, hangs about their shadows.



As I looked, the spirit of the Past uprose so grim and horrible, so soiled with unutterable deeds of darkness, that I turned with horror from the fatal spot.

Leaving the Rospigliosi gardens, I emerged close by the tomb of Pompey, on the *regina viarum*, the Appian Way, whose every stone seems alive with the history of the past. After the imperial Cæsars—those magnificent masters of the material world—perhaps no single names stand out in such strong relief as those of St. Paul and Horace, who each have left recorded in their writings the day and the hour (so to say) when they passed over its massive pavement eighteen centuries ago. The beautiful legend connecting St. Paul with the Appian Way I have already noticed.

In the year 713, Mecænas, Cocceius, and Capitonius were sent by the senate to Brundisium, in order to effect a reconciliation between Augustus and Antony, who was then besieging that city. Horace accompanied his friends, and in celebrating this expedition has left a most interesting description of the journey, showing how, for the first two stages, they pursued the Appian way. (See Satire V., Book I.)

I have already mentioned Albano, *à propos* of

the delightful though hurried excursion I made there. I had now more time to view it at leisure. The modern town, a long straggling street, occupies a portion of what was the imperial villa. It is, to my mind, a hot stuffy place, abounding with donkeys and vulgarity. One sees the same *blasé* faces, the same impertinent *flâneurs* that haunted one on the Corso at Rome. Coming from the religious silence of our mountain retreat, it appeared to me an insufferable scene of confusion, dust, and tawdriness.

I put up my horse at the *locanda*, and strolled into the grounds of the Villa Doria. An English garden, gay with flowers, slopes towards the south, while the surrounding grounds are belted with woods, where one enjoys the sea breezes wafted over the adjacent olive-gardens. A pile of ruins and subterraneous excavations in the thickest portion of the grove mark the supposed sight of Pompey's favourite country palace, whither the devoted Cornelia bore his ashes, after he was murdered by the treacherous Ptolemy. His ruined sepulchre outside the gates of Albano I have already described.

Pompey, in the few peaceful intervals of his chequered life, appears to have preferred the amusements of the country to the cares and anx-

ieties of the ever unquiet Forum. Plutarch, indeed, reproaches him for leaving his friends and soldiers to rove about Italy from one villa to another with his first wife Julia, the daughter of Cæsar, to whom he was passionately attached. Although he was considerably her senior, and not at all attractive in person, she returned his love with the utmost affection; "but," says the shrewd old biographer, "it was the charm of his *fidelity*, together with his conversation, which, notwithstanding his natural gravity, was particularly agreeable." When Julia died, Pompey came to this villa, where they had so often resided together, to solemnise the ceremony of her interment; but the people, out of regard to him, seized on her corpse, and insisted on burying it in the Campus Martius. At Julia's death the alliance between himself and Cæsar ended, and that fatal war, destined so soon to end his brilliant career, broke out.

It is related in his life that Cicero, having offended Cæsar by the execution of Lentulus and Cethegus, two leaders of the Catiline conspiracy, was informed he would either be obliged to defend himself by the sword or to go into exile. In this dilemma he resolved to apply to Pompey (hitherto his friend) to act as a mediator. But Pompey,

then the husband of Cæsar's daughter, purposely absented himself at his Alban villa; and when informed by Piso, Cicero's son-in-law, that the great orator waited without to speak to him, he, not being able to bear the sight of his former friend in such miserable circumstances (his friend who had fought such worthy battles for him, and rendered him so many important services in the course of his administration), actually escaped out of the house by a back-door. As I looked at the scattered ruins which once formed the villa, the whole scene rose vividly before me, and the idea of great Pompey escaping by a back-door particularly diverted me.

Now I must tell you more of the vagaries of our Rocca life. We have had a grand festa—yes, indeed, a festa which has turned us all *sotto sopra*—in honour of the *Madonna del Tufo*. The origin of this festa is worth relating. At the top of the town a beautiful terrace-walk overshadowed by venerable trees skirts the face of the richly-wooded heights—a walk poised, as it were, in mid-air, 'twixt earth and heaven. At the end of this walk—the Corso of the Rocco—is a small church under an overhanging cliff. A stranger would stare at seeing that the altar is constructed of a great shapeless mass of tufa-rock (which the

people reverently kiss), and that little frescoes on the walls record the fall of this rock. Now the story goes that three travellers once passed along this road in winter. The thunder rolled through the woods; the lightning glared fiercely athwart the Campagna; all Nature was convulsed. Suddenly a portion of the rocky bank, wrenched violently from its foundation, came thundering down the cliff towards the narrow terrace-road. The travellers heard the crash, and gave up all hope of life. Below was a precipice, above a mountain; no escape seemed possible. They called wildly on the Madonna—they lifted their hands in prayer—when, wonderful to relate, at the very moment that the rocky mass was suspended over their heads, the Madonna, bearing her Jesus-child, appeared. Ay, appeared on the very rock which in an instant more would engulf them; and lo! the huge mass was miraculously turned aside, and crashed down the fearful chasm below, leaving the travellers unhurt. In gratitude they vowed a shrine here to the Virgin Mother, where she is invoked by the name of “Our Lady of the Rock.” The rock, raised by incredible labour, now forms the altar, and is looked on, as Maria says, “*come una cosa di grandissima devozione.*” It is a pretty, simple church, nestling under the crags on a little

platform overlooking the Lake of Albano, whose waters sleep calmly below.

The inhabitants all vie with each other at the Rocca who shall most honour the Virgin—their *own* Madonna, as they fondly call her. It is a festa known far and wide; crowds come from Rome and the environs to kneel at the shrine, and spend a joyous day in the breezy woods. When the morning came, you would have thought our little place was gone clean mad. Cannons were fired from the ruined fortress; scores of carriages laden with gentry and holiday folks lined the roads; horsemen and donkeymen came up by hundreds; the street was all astir—such a hum of voices, such ringing laughter, such smiles and sparkling eyes on every side! Men and maidens donned their best; crimson and yellow draperies floated from the houses; the bells rang cheerily out; the band from Frascati played martial airs; garlands of evergreens festooned the walls; and torches stood ready in the streets, wreathed with flowers, to be lighted in the evening. Then came the procession winding down from the Duomo, and very pretty it looked against the dark walls of the quaint old houses. There were priests walking two and two, habited in white and red, and followed by small acolytes swinging censers;



then came a great banner on poles painted in radiant colours; then more priests, and a huge cross made of rough wood, painfully recalling "the accursed tree;" then another great banner, which, as there was a fresh wind blowing, was very nearly ascending bodily into the ambient air, the poor standard-bearers making the drollest grimaces as they frantically called on their fellows to assist them. Then came more crosses and some big lanterns. The low chanting of the choir rose in solemn cadence, one group taking up the anthem, then another—a grave and melancholy music exceedingly impressive. Then clouds of incense rose in streams of rich perfume, "the sad and warning strains" falling more earnestly upon the ear; then the priests prayed with greater unction; at last, descending the hill, appeared a famous miraculous picture in a heavy, lumbering frame, raised on a kind of stand, and borne on the shoulders of a dozen men. Like most miraculous paintings, it was as dark and black as night to eyes profane. In front walked the high-priest (*archidiacono*), a grand-looking personage in flowing robes, diligently reciting prayers. And then came a perfect sea of contadine, pressing, crowding about the venerated image with eager enthusiasm; their snowy head-gear, scarlet

bodices, golden crosses, ear-rings, and floating draperies of lace and ribbon lending life and animation to the scene. All fell prostrate on their knees as the picture passed—the pretty ladies in the balcony opposite, the ragged urchins in the streets, the handsome baker, and our fat *nouveau riche* landlord, who, with all his vices, professes to be a devoted knight of the Madonna. It was very impressive to watch that simple yet earnest crowd, so hushed and silent; and to listen to the echoing chants, like soft voices of guardian angels, ever and anon bursting forth in a pæan of love and praise; while in front stretched the wide Campagna, trackless, boundless, like a golden sea, melting into mystic fields of loveliest blue and richest purple. After the miraculous picture came files of monks, white-robed Trinitarians, the red and blue cross embroidered on their breasts; and brown-habited Franciscans (*Osservanti*), with shaven crowns and hempen girdles; and two old priests leading pretty children dressed as angels, graceful smooth-faced things, their long, tangling hair garlanded with flowers hanging down over blue and white draperies, their small sandalled feet daintily pressing the rude stones. Such *concetti* as these might not be expedient elsewhere, but here in the sunny South, the land of ideality



and symbolism, they are both appropriate and suggestive.

After the procession had passed we sallied out to see the humours of this religious fair. Along the terrace-walk the fun waxed fast and furious. Such thousands of people, such dust, such a braying of donkeys, and such a sun!—it was altogether overwhelming. Hundreds of stalwart young Roman peasants were there, their jackets thrown jauntily over one shoulder; and hosts of lovely girls in every variety of picturesque costume, rural Venuses these, village Circes, with wicked eyes and bright olive complexions, determined to slay no end of hearts. 'Twas *such* a picture, with the various groups passing and repassing against the browned masses of old rock, all carpeted with graceful plants, or emerging from under the broad sweeping branches of the large chestnut trees, whose silvery trunks gleamed in the chequered shade! The noise, the laughter, the mad rushing to and fro of ponies and donkeys, regardless where they went, or whom they upset, the vendors of fruit, and pictures, and cakes, all screaming in inharmonious unison, were prodigious.

“Signora, tanta buona—un bajocco la libbra, frutta fresca freschissima—Ecco signora, guardi,

la Madonna, la Madonna del Tufo, il sommo miracolo, for a halfpenny—Buy the *Madonna, tanta buona*, for one halfpenny!—*Fiori*—a bouquet—*sua Signoria* must have a flower for the *buona festa—Fiori! Ecco! Fiori! Hi!—Ha!—Venite tutti quanti!*”

The nearer we approached the church the more the Babel increased. The crowd making its way in and out was tremendous. Such kneelings, such kissings, such frantic mutterings of prayers around the altar, now begemmed and bespangled with gold and tinsel! Those who one instant were vociferating, and swearing, and gesticulating, as if possessed by seven devils, the next moment were prostrate on the earth, repeating *Aves* as fast as they could gabble. Girls, who a second before had been looking *such* things out of their lustrous eyes, were now devoutly repeating their coronas, as if such mischievous animals as men were not in existence. Naughty roaring babies, rampaging boys, were schooled into silence. The very dogs which forced themselves in with their masters behaved with orthodox propriety.

Stuck up outside the church was a daub representing an old woman sitting by a table piled with gold, while from beneath the table a monster, neither flesh, fowl, nor fish, glared at her with

unearthly eyes—a most hideous beast. An old blind man supported the picture, while his wife, gifted with extraordinary loquacity, repeated the story—“*Di una vecchia vedovella, miserabile il suo stato, nella città di Milano.*”

An immense crowd speedily assembled.

“*Signori Cristiani, per l'amore della Madonna,* give me a penny!” cried the blind man in a hollow voice, which served as a kind of under-current, in the style of a Greek chorus, to the shouts of his wife, who repeated the wonderful adventures of Caterina and the *Fantasma*.

“*Ascoltate—eccellenze* all and every one—listen while I relate the miserable story of the *vedovella* of Milano. One night, in a vision, she heard a voice—surely it was the voice of the *diavolo* himself—and the voice said: ‘Go, Caterina, to the *loteria*, and choose the number 5; thou shalt win—*ve lo prometto.*’ When morning was come, Caterina went, but the gold—she had no gold to buy his lottery ticket.” . . .

Here the woman paused.

“*Cristiani*, great, noble, excellent signors, for the love of our *own* Madonna, give me a *bajocco!*” groaned out her husband.

A few pieces clinked in his bag.

“A neighbour, *sua amica*—a loving and kind

neighbour, *tanta Cristiana*, had no gold, but lent Caterina a counterpane when she asked for it, which the wicked Caterina (ah! *peccatrice!*) went and pawned. Yes, pawned the counterpane her friend had lent her, because she said she was cold and *povera, povera. Ahi! la povertà! Miseri noi.* Then with the money she bought the number, and gained the prize—*si, amici miei*, Caterina gained a great prize. But her friend, *quella Cristiana che non era Cristiana*—having discovered by chance what had happened, possessed by the *demonio* (all the saints guard us from the temptation of the devil!), full of envy and rage, whispered it into the ear of her *cavaliere*—*un certo carabinieri*—who spoke and said: ‘Maria, I know how that money is to be got.’ Then that sinner, the *carabiniere*, took pitch, and paint, and hair, and blood, and bones, and in an instant made himself into a horrible *Fantasma*, and at midnight, when the pale dead walk forth from their graves in winding-sheets, this *scellerato*——”

The blind man, who had long been threatening an interruption, was no longer to be appeased.

“*Eccellenze*, by the pains of purgatory, a *bajocco!* I will pray for you all, *buoni Cristiani*, seven *Aves*, and four *Glorias*. *Cristiani, signori*,

listen—I will pray—may your souls rest in peace—a *bajocco*—a single one. Excellent good countrymen, for the sake of my wife's fine *racconto*, money, *per pietà!*"

"*Zigarri, zigarri, good zigarri!*" broke in from the other side a limping beggar, thinking the moment opportune to sell his wares while the crowd was collected. But this new actor on the scene was summarily ejected by the united efforts of the crowd, now deeply interested in the *orrido Fantasma* and the blind man's wife, who fought like a cur who finds another of his species prowling on his peculiar walk.

"Thanking the excellent company for the charity shown to the poor *cieco* my husband, and with the *permesso* of the *società*, I shall recommence. This wicked *scellerato* the *carabiniere* hid himself in Caterina's room, and in the silence of the night, after making certain fearful *rumori* such as the devils do in the Inferno, he spoke in these words:—

"Caterina, Caterina, in the power of the Evil One art thou; give me the money, or I carry thee in my claws swift off to hell."

"*Ah! Cristiani, pensa ai dolori del inferno!* help us, good friends—money—a *bajocco!*" cried the *cieco*.

But at this interesting moment, when all stood transfixed in horrified curiosity (especially one pretty girl sitting at a table hard by, drinking wine, who by turns flirted with a crowd of *cavalieri*, then, growing pale at all these images of the devil and purgatory, crossed herself devoutly), the arrival of a large party of American friends from Albano deprived us of the conclusion of this lamentable tragedy.

By this time numerous parties had bivouacked in the woods, and were preparing to dine under the shade of the chestnut trees. The orthodox dish on this day was roast pig, that unclean animal being in some incomprehensible manner connected with the festa of the Madonna. Roast pig was selling piping hot in all directions, and very good it looked; but as we had a famous *chef* at home, we preferred domestic luxuries, with plates and spoons, to an Arcadian meal on the ground.

In the evening fireworks were let off just under our house, and exceedingly brilliant they were—fountains of fire, lakes of sulphur emitting blue sparks, rockets for a moment mocking the mildly-twinkling stars, then Icarus-like falling back in glittering showers. We had a temple of silver, mountains of gold, and all sorts of gaudy marvels,

concluding with a grand *girandola* that shot forth a world of light, popping and fizzing like an angry monster. Then calm, unsullied night closed over the moving scene; and the moon rode high, casting gigantic shadows over the vague space below. So ended the great festa day at Rocca di Papa.

Our great man here is the baker, who stands all day smoking within the *portone* of his house, his red cap hitched on one side of his head. A jolly dog is the baker, Teresina's lover, as all the world knows, for the *società* go to his house every evening to a kind of club, and drink wine and play cards until far into the night, making the little street echo to their carouse. What roars of laughter, what riotous, joyous choruses have often "murdered sleep" from over the way! Sometimes they have an *accademia* and really delightful music. A flute is particularly "brave" on these occasions, and sends forth the most aërial music, wafted to us by the night breezes. Then there is a guitar twanging joyous *ritornelli*, recalling bright Venice, with its dark, gliding gondolas, its love and its poetry. At other times a solitary song is heard. Now, could you believe that these melodious whispers, floating "through regions mild and calm," are all emanations from the baker's;

and that when the delicious music has sighed away, there is a rude riotous chorus, and shouts of *Bis* and *Bravo*, bringing one's poetic enthusiasm down suddenly to zero? Such are the vivid contrasts of our mountain home—idyllic poetry and *bourgeois* prose.

A principal character at the baker's is the Sicilian *cavaliere*, a dot of a man, made up altogether of a stentorian voice—a very Goliath to speak withal, who talks as fast as Figaro in a passion and thumps the table as he gives you the latest news from Rome in a quite Neapolitan shower of words. Count Dionigi, who lodges below, abominates the baker and his jovial club and looks indignant if you admire the music. Dionigi, called by the Italians *Fosseficato*, or the Fossil, lives at Cività Lavinia, the ancient Lanuvium, and has never during the last fifty years, been known to change one iota—neither growing older nor younger, fatter nor thinner, but remaining ever the same starched little figure, with the same well-regulated grey hair. If all the world were turned into dust, not a grain would rest on his immaculate blue coat—dust and that coat are as antagonistic as the poles. Dionigi has never married. A wife would be *de trop* to such a male old maid; and as for children—pah! When he

comes to see me he makes a *riverenza* like a dancing-master, rises on his toes, and gracefully advancing, repeats that I am "an angel, a divinity," with a stiff little bow at the close of each well-used phrase. Then down he sits, hat in hand, crossing his tiny knees—the funny little manikin! His exits are capital; he rises, bows, and says "he will raise the *incomodo*;" shoulders his stick, which always plays a principal part in his little drama; stands erect; bows; retreats; then bows again, repeating at each move, "*I miei rispetti—Signora bella, amabile*"—spreading his polite blessings from side to side like a priest at mass. They say Dionigi has something to do with a very romantic story, of which I am anxious to learn the particulars.

Among our characters, Giuseppe della Fante, our *maestro di casa*, must not be forgotten; he who, according to his own account, is sprung from a decayed Roman family, has once been a soldier, and cannot accommodate himself pleasantly to his altered fortunes. There he stands at the baker's door, cigar in mouth, with his great moustache, military cap, full French trousers, big enough to make an ordinary woman's petticoat, and his spurs—those eternal spurs! Seeing that he never rides more than once a week, and then on

the back of a wretched pony, those spurs are a mystery to us. "*Ma*," as the Italians say, "*fanno impressione*." Certainly there is some sympathetic affinity between the extinct glories of the Delle Fante line and those spurs in Giuseppe's mind. How he chaffs with the pretty maidens skipping in to buy bread! How he gossips with the doctor and the *priore*! How he patronises the *carabinieri*, and kicks the dirty urchins who presume to touch those sacred spurs! All this and much more you should see with your own eyes. He is a regular Italian, violent, excitable, impressionable, easily offended, yet so devoted, generous, and self-forgetting, that one really ends by admiring his very faults. Speak kindly to him, and tears spring up like dewdrops in his sparkling, brigand-looking eyes; ask him to do any wonderful thing—to ride to Rome in an hour, to scale a precipice for the sake of a flower, to hunt the woods for a favourite bird—and he rushes forth with as chivalrous a good-will as the veriest carpet-knight that ever donned a lady's scarf.

The quarrels he gets into, the imaginary battles he fights, the bloody recitals with which he regales the select audience at the baker's—recitals about stilettoes and pistols, encounters with banditti, gaping wounds, threats of vengeance and

extermination against his enemies generally—*bagatelle! come vi pare!* Then the adventures he has encountered (Heaven only knows whether they be romance or truth)—the grandeur of his appearance on festa days, his tender care of my children, with whom, if they are merry, he romps after the fashion of an old dog lying down to be kicked—his savage ill-humour if his dignity be offended—his bursts of passion—his humble apologies—his alternate smiles and frowns, make up quite an epitome of human life. Poor Giuseppe, genuine child of the South, thou hast the vices and virtues of thy race and of thy clime, but thou hast an honest and a kindly heart!

CHAPTER X.

Feast of SS. Peter and Paul—St. Peter's Illuminated—
The Girandola.

THE Feast of SS. Peter and Paul is the birthday of Rome. Heat and the fear of malaria have by that time driven every foreigner away—which was to me an especial recommendation. So, in the early morning, before the mid-day sun had become dangerously hot, I traversed the parched Campagna, and found myself at the Lateran Gate.

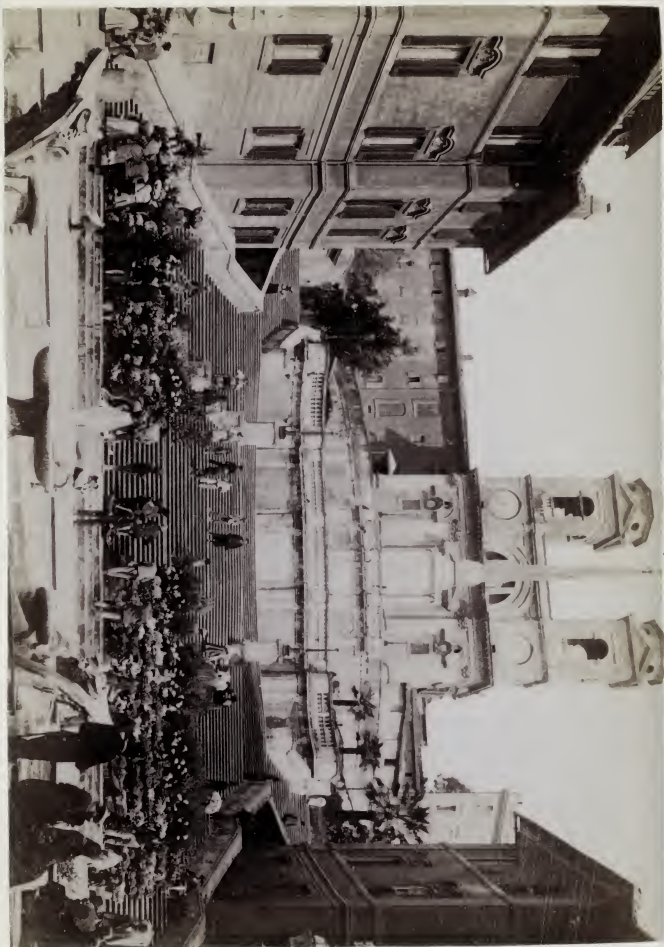
Everything told of heat and a raging Italian sun. People sat pale and exhausted at the shop-doors, armed with paper whisks with which languidly to drive away the flies; little extempore fountains bubbled up on tiny tables spread with delicious pulpy lemons, and *acque dolci* (sweet drinks) cooled with fresh vine-leaves. Every woman and child we passed, of whatever degree, carried a fan, which she used industriously; the very beggars shook their tin boxes in one

hand, and fanned themselves with the other. All labours, trades, and occupations were carried on in the streets, which, never too wide, were now almost choked up. Shoemakers were making shoes; tailors were sitting cross-legged on tables squeezed up against their house-walls; women were cutting and stitching on low stools, surrounded by their gipsy-eyed progeny; girls were combing each other's hair (often a severe test of friendship in hot weather); and men were walking under the eaves with their hats in their hands, all pale, worn, exhausted. The three-legged tables outside the cafés were crowded with sleepy or sleeping men: the scarcely-awake were indulging in ices or drinks—the sleepers were lying about in the strangest attitudes; for an Italian could sleep, I believe, on one leg, if he tried. It being about noon, the street kitchens were in active operation—fish, flesh, and fowl hissing and broiling over pans of charcoal; and stands of fruit, apricots, figs, and cherries, ripe and ready to drop into one's mouth.

When we reached the English quarter, the Piazza di Spagna, great were the emptiness and the desolation. The windows in the hotels were hermetically sealed, and the doors shut. Piale's library was a wilderness. Not a soul was to be

seen. The long flight of the Trinità steps was scorching and vacant. The little fountains at its base bubbled in an utter solitude. No groups of peasants were lounging there *en tableaux*. The man who does the venerable father with long beard and patriarchal garments—a special rascal; and the young man with the high-art features, who does the saints and apostles with a glory round his head; the beauty-peasant with yards of white drapery folded over her glossy braids, under which glow the impudent glancing eyes, coral beads, and gold necklace—all gone, driven out by the heat! Gone, too, was that dear little boy who sat for an angel when he was not stretching out his little dimpled hand, asking, like Oliver, for “more,” and his father, clad in sheep-skins, who, with slouched hat and ragged cloak, did the everlasting conspirator.

Such is Rome in the dog-days—no life, no carriages, no sound; like the enchanted city in the Arabian Nights, all lay sunk in slumber. We descended, as the polite French say, at the Palazzo M——, where apartments had been secured—a noble residence, big enough to take up one side of a square, with *salons* so large that people looked dim and misty at the further end. That very evening St. Peter’s was to be illuminated;



so, after fortifying ourselves with an excellent dinner, sent in piping hot in a tin box from a neighbouring *trattoria*, and further recruiting ourselves by draughts of refreshing Orvieto out of wicker bottles, we attained that contented and happy state of mind proper to the eve of a great festa. Evening, delicious, balmy evening, had come; the breeze swept through the streets, and the stars peeped out as we started—together with hundreds and thousands of the Pope's undutiful subjects—for St. Peter's. On these grand occasions the Ponte Sant' Angelo is closed to the vulgar, who are obliged to pass over the Tiber into the Trastevere. Plunging into the narrow streets that lead thither, the site of the home of Raphael's Fornarina was pointed out to me. It is now a small two-windowed house, the lower portion used as a magazine of herbs—Anglicè, the greengrocery business. While our carriage is slowly advancing through labyrinths of streets, every now and then stopped by the *carabinieri* (here acting as policemen), who rush upon us with drawn swords, I will tell my readers the real story of Raphael and the Fornarina.

When Raphael was painting his beautiful frescoes in the Farnesina Palace in the Trastevere, he passed daily over the bridge and through this

narrow street to his work. One day, it is said, he saw a beautiful black-haired girl, of the voluptuous type painters love so well, bathing her white feet in the waters of the Tiber. From that hour all peace of mind forsook him, and he forgot even art in his earnest desire to be loved by her. The baker's daughter, however, was already provided with a lover, a certain fierce soldier stained with the blood of many battles, who aspired to the possession of this peerless beauty. Egidio had no refinement of soul, no "intellect of love;" but the outward charms of the girl had touched him, and he swore that if any one else presumed to approach her, he would finish him with a *stoccata*. Catterinella, never having known the delicious frenzy of love, had hitherto submitted with that grace which arises from perfect indifference to the advances of the soldier. He often came to her father's shop, and gossiped and smoked, until she grew used to him, and Egidio, in a manner became domesticated. But when Raphael came also, and talked, and cast loving glances out of his beautiful eyes at Catterinella, she began to detest the soldier, and to feel all the joys and pains of first love. Raphael not only rapidly insinuated himself into her heart, but with that amiability and grace which he so eminently

possessed, fascinated even the rough baker himself. He was too much absorbed in his art to spend much time at the shop, but that very art afforded him the readiest means of advancing his suit. He asked Giuseppe to allow his daughter to sit to him for her picture; and he, though but a common vulgar tradesman, still had enough respect for the fine arts, then so generally cultivated in Rome, to consider the request as a compliment, and to comply. But he made Raphael promise never to mention his compliance, both out of regard to Catterinella's fair fame, and for fear of the rough soldier, Egidio, whose blind jealousy might prompt him to commit some violence. When Catterinella first went to Raphael's studio it was secretly and cautiously, and accompanied by her mother; but so frequent were the visits of Egidio, and so ardent his passion for Catterinella, that it was impossible for their absence not to raise his suspicions. One day when they had left the shop, as they supposed unobserved, he watched them, and, seeing them enter a doorway and ascend a staircase, followed. The door was inadvertently left open. Egidio entered, and stealing noiselessly into the spacious studio, hid himself among some lumber. Unable

to control his fierce passions at seeing Catterinella seated opposite Raphael, Egidio drew his stiletto and rushed on the painter, who, at that very instant poising his brush in the air, was intently and passionately examining the Fornarina's features. The women, horrified at the sudden apparition of Egidio, his naked dagger and horrid looks, screamed aloud; but Raphael, unarmed as he was, rose and faced his assailant. No sooner did Egidio recognise Sanzio as the detested rival whom he was about to murder—Sanzio, whom he regarded as a deity, whom he had heard celebrated as the very wonder of the world—than he stood transfixed, and the stiletto dropped from his hand. A few inarticulate words of excuse and prayers for pardon fell from his lips. Touched by the humane looks of Raphael, who gazed on him with a kind of pitying astonishment, Egidio endeavoured, in broken words, to explain the motives which had induced this murderous attack. He spoke of his love; he pleaded his jealousy. Then he turned towards the affrighted Catterinella, who, scared by his fierce looks, scarcely dared to raise her head, while he himself, speaking with ill-suppressed passion, implored her to be calm. He assured her he would not injure her, but he conjured her, by all she held most sacred, to tell

him if she really loved him. Catterinella, inspired by the passionate excitement of the moment, forgot her fears of Egidio, his cruelty, his jealousy; she forgot all save Raphael—the sun under whose rays she had expanded into a new and delicious life—Raphael, the god of her idolatry, who stood pale and speechless before her. Raising her eyes to his face, she acknowledged the love she had long secretly cherished in her heart, and confessed in faltering accents that he was dear to her beyond all other mortals. Egidio was struck dumb. Seizing his dagger, which had fallen on the floor, he rushed from the studio. Relieved from the fascination of Raphael's countenance and majestic presence, Egidio, grasping his weapon in his hand, resolved to return and murder him; but when he remembered the words of Catterinella—when he recalled those passionate words in which she had confessed her love—his resolution again changed. “Why kill him because she loves me no longer?” exclaimed he. Honour and despair strove in the breast of the savage soldier. Love, hope, life—all had passed into the possession of another, and that other a man so godlike that he could scarcely, even in the wild paroxysms of his rage, wonder at the preference. His violent nature could not endure such torture, and, in utter despair, he

plunged into his own breast the weapon he had raised against Sanzio.

As we turned into the Lungara every palace was illuminated with red lights. The immense Corsini Palace shone out brilliantly, and looked the very image of a magnificent feudal residence. Lights glittered along its immense façade, row above row to the very roof, while at intervals along the street were planted huge torches of burning pitch that blazed and flashed and cast ruddy unearthly tints on the white palace behind, while great bonfires of tar-barrels, poked up by men with long poles, flared away on the ground. Immovable in the doorway stood the porter, *bâton* in hand—a mass of lace, badges, and cocked hat, evidently convinced that the whole dignity of the Corsini line consisted in his majestic deportment. A little crowding, some swearing, and a great amount of butting from the *carabinieri*, who ride full tilt at man, horse, or carriage that offends them, and we were within the colonnade of St. Peter's, that noble colonnade now glittering with lights, whose outstretched arms seemed to clasp in one embrace all the people of the universe. Never does St. Peter's look so beautiful as when illuminated. The magnificent building, with its encircling colonnades; its topmost cupola; its

population of saints, prophets, angels, and apostles crowding the roof; and the cross surmounting all, hangs amid the very stars, a glittering vision. It is not in the power of words to convey any adequate notion of St. Peter's that night; each pillar, each arch in the mighty structure, was marked out by lines of mellowed light below, above, around, not massed in any one place, but gracefully following the lines and undulations of the vast fabric.

For awhile we contemplated what is called the *silver* illumination, when the lights are veiled. Exactly one hour and a quarter after the first hour of night a cannon was fired from the fort of Sant' Angelo. The harmonious bells of St. Peter's tolled out in response, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, streams of ruddy light flashed up from below into the colonnades, marking their elegant outlines, through a thousand glittering columns. What had been pale subdued light now blazed forth in flakes of ruddy fire. The great basilica was enveloped in streams of quivering brightness, its gigantic front, white as alabaster, standing out with a strange clearness on a background of flames. Great vases of burning pitch, provided as if by enchantment, suddenly burst out between every column in the vast colonnade;

every statue burned with a living light, that rose up and flared, as the wind caught the forked flames, like a universal conflagration. The cupola especially, beautifully relieved by the dark sky behind, flashed out in a blaze of the most dazzling splendour; while above, surmounting all, the radiant cross shone with indescribable brilliancy—a brand as it were snatched from heaven. It was beautiful to see the gushing fountains reflecting thousands of lamps in their pure water; shooting up in liquid pillars to fall back a foamy mass of molten silver; cooling the air and sending out clouds of delicious spray. Then the bells broke forth in merry chimes, deep-toned and musical; military bands struck up in the piazza; and the cannon from Sant’ Angelo boomed distinctly above all other sounds.

Next morning (St. Peter’s Day) we rose very early, to attend high mass at St. Peter’s Church, the ceremonies being precisely similar to those which take place at Easter, with this notable difference, that Romans, not English and Americans, form the congregation. Every one flocked to the all-embracing arms of that great piazza, and we soon fell into a long line of carriages slowly advancing towards the basilica. Again we crossed the muddy Tiber, its volume much lessened by



the rainless summer. The houses and palaces bordering the river, always of a peculiarly mellow warm tint, now looked baked with the fierce heat. Clouds of fine small dust rose in the light summer breeze. Altogether, it was a great relief to be again engulfed in the narrow, shady streets of the Trastevere. Every passage and cranny leading to St. Peter's was choked and overflowing with an ever-increasing multitude. They came in boats; they came in grand equipages; in humble *baroccini*; on foot; to worship at that magnificent shrine.

Streams of people spread over the piazza, and, mounting the steps, were engulfed by the great portals. We entered. The mellow light of morning subdued the too glaring details of the florid architecture. The church was in grand gala, walls and pillars draped with red and gold, assimilating harmoniously with the brilliant coloured marbles and mosaics. The cupola, rising like a firmament, shone in the slanting rays of the morning sun—angels, saints, and prophets emblazoned in bright colours on the golden frescoes. Beneath, the altar was spread with the costliest vessels of gold, chalices, cups, salvers, and crosses carved by the hands of Cellini or Bramante, all radiant with sparkling jewels.

On either side were enclosures prepared for

the ladies, who came in black veils and dresses *de rigueur*; but instead of the irreverent Easter crowd rushing, pushing, laughing, and talking, as if in the crush-room of the opera, the seats were thinly occupied by a sprinkling of ladies, whose devout looks showed that they came to pray, and not to stare. The tribune behind the high-altar was hung with crimson, and to the left stood a throne prepared for the Pope. Down the central aisle an avenue was formed by the civic guard and the quaint Swiss soldiers, through which his holiness was to pass. We were scarcely settled when a hush and a general motion of expectation announced that the Pope had arrived at the central door. Slowly and silently the magnificent procession passed up towards the altar. First came the Swiss guards, and the chamberlains in red silk. Then Pius, seated on the "gestorial" chair or throne, glittering with gold, purple, and crimson, wearing his triple crown, and habited in robes of white. Over him was borne a dais of crimson and gold, while beside him were carried two great fans of peacock's feathers, typical of immortality. There is a look of Eastern magnificence about these fans extremely striking. The Pope, calm and majestic, dispensed blessings as he passed with the air of one wrapped in deep devotion. He

was followed by the entire Sacred College, all aglow with crimson and guipure lace, a sight calculated to break any lady's heart on the score of misplaced finery. Chaplains, secretaries, and chamberlains (mere minnows to these ecclesiastical Tritons) fluttered in their rear, followed by files of the superbly-dressed Guardia Nobile, all picked men, tall, graceful, handsome; disciplined in the encounters of social warfare and "carpet knighthood;" now superb in glistening helmets, short scarlet mantles, and a generally classic air, reminding one of Pollio in *Norma*, whose social line of conduct, as well as outward costume, they are said to emulate. The Pope was now seated on this throne, and the mass began.

It is to my mind a fatal want in the otherwise noble ceremonial of the Papal mass at St. Peter's that the music is entirely vocal. Part-singing, however perfect, is monotonous. The Pope's famous choristers are always invisible, caged like singing-birds, in a golden-latticed gallery. The Gregorian chant, although admirable as mediæval music, becomes wearisome after two hours' duration, and the mass is long to exhaustion. The Pope stands, walks, and kneels, sometimes at his throne, sometimes at the high-altar, sometimes alone, and sometimes surrounded by the cardinals.

One wonders how he can remember such constant changes, unless one happens to know there is an officer attached to the Papal court whose sole business it is to prompt him, and to keep him and the cardinals "well posted up" in their daily duties—what dresses to wear, what to "eat, drink, and avoid." Sometimes there is a pause, the music ceases, the Pope and cardinals sit enthroned (Anglicè, rest themselves), and the golden vessels are moved and removed on the high-altar. During one of these pauses I looked round at the groups near the high-altar (where the mere vulgar crowd is not allowed to penetrate) and wondered at the curiously mediæval aspect of the scene. Here were party-coloured Swiss guards, red, yellow, and black, with steel caps and corslets, commanded by officers in complete armour of polished steel inlaid with gold, some actually wearing steel-chain tunics over crimson velvet, with golden helmets, so that when two or three whispered together they instantly formed a picture for Maclise—Papal chamberlains, picturesque in high Elizabethan ruffs, doublets, gold chains, orders, long hose, and rosetted shoes; regular Sir Walter Raleighs, and, like him, remnants of a century when Spain ruled European fashions as France does now—priests breaking the mundane pageant





here and there, and reminding one of the mass still proceeding (which, by reason of its length and pauses, seemed over long before it really was), in every kind, colour, and variety of gold-embroidered vestments—officers in dark uniforms, and officers in white uniforms, diligently keeping back masses of Roman peasants, gaudy as butterflies as to body and petticoat, and quite laden with chains and crosses, earrings and flowers, gold, silver, and pearls; many of them wondrously handsome women. To all these add rows of black-veiled ladies sitting on either side in the reserved seats, backed by the many-coloured walls rich with mosaics and variegated marbles up to the very cupola, where, under a glare of light, the four gigantic Evangelists in the spandrels of the arches float in a haze of golden sunshine.

Again we settled down to the mass. The Pope advanced to the altar, denuded of mitre and royal trappings, and wearing a plain white dress. The music ceased; the attendant prelates retired; every knee was bent; every head bowed in seeming devotion. Alone on the steps of the altar stood that venerable old man, his hands clasped over the elements, his eyes turned to heaven. While he communicated, the silence was positively awful. Then, stealing around, came the soft

sounds of the silver trumpets, low and plaintive, at first, as wailing spirits, then swelling forth in a hosanna of joy and praise. The Pope, holding in his hand the host, turned to the four quarters of the globe. The *Agnus Dei* was chanted; the Pope resumed his robes and retired as he came, bestowing blessings around; and the crowd, ebbing and flowing like a human sea, cast its vast waves through every open door into the piazza beyond, where the burning sunshine caught and absorbed them in its rays. We, too, with these thousands of living victims, were ruthlessly clutched by that burning monster, the sun, waiting to devour us the instant we left the kindly shelter of the cool sanctuary.

But the celebrations of Rome's great festa to her patron saint were not yet over. Magnificent pleasures were yet awaiting us in the Piazza del Popolo at the first hour of night. The piazza is now densely filled. The fountains and obelisks rise out of acres of pleasure-loving Romans; galleries are erected in the porticoes of the twin churches opposite the Flaminian Gate. Every window is filled, and every eye turned in expectant eagerness towards the Pincian Hill, where amid lofty terraces and sculptured trophies, gigantic statues and dark ilex woods, the *girandola* (fire-



works) is to be exhibited. Meanwhile, the usual fanning and consuming of ices and of sweet drinks goes on among the Roman princesses, seated on a raised estrade, looking as haughty and unpleasant as any classical Cornelias or Volumnias that history could furnish.

The herald cannon sound, and up fly millions of rockets, descending in blue, red, purple, and yellow stars. When these brilliant comets allow us to look round, the summit of the Pincian is transformed into a great temple of fire, enclosed by walls of quivering crystal, broken by niches filled with fiery statues—a temple such as Vulcan might have reared to Venus in the infernal shades.

Now volleys of deafening cannon rattle till one's ears ache, and, behold! overlapping streams of liquid fire rush down the steep sides of the Pincian into the piazza, and mysteriously disappear in showers of golden sparks, which the crowd struggles to catch; but, lo! they are gone! Then we have an *intermezzo* of rockets and catherine-wheels, the cannons all the time outdoing one another; and now a burning palace appears, with great halls and galleries, and endless arcades and colonnades, in fiery perspective, red with palpitating flames. Such a palace might have suited the ghosts in Vathek, condemned to

wander hither and thither for ever through boundless vaults of fire, clasping a flaming heart under folds of shadowy drapery.

I could not tell all the wonderful tricks and changes of these marvellous fireworks. The enchanter Merlin never terrified his enemies with more surprising displays of his transforming art. As a final triumph, the whole Pincian became the crater of a horrible volcano, belching forth fire and flames, while the roar of cannon mimicked the thunders of the labouring mountain. Red lava-streams rushed down in every direction, and millions of rockets shot up into the heavens, to fall back bright and glittering, like planets fallen from their spheres.

A moment more, and all was over. The moon shone down serenely in a soft twilight, casting pale lights on the statues and terraced galleries, as if all else had been a disordered dream.

And here my Diary ends. I am suddenly called back to England, and "the Idle Woman" (not so very idle after all) lays down her pen and becomes "the woman of the period," with *really* nothing to do!

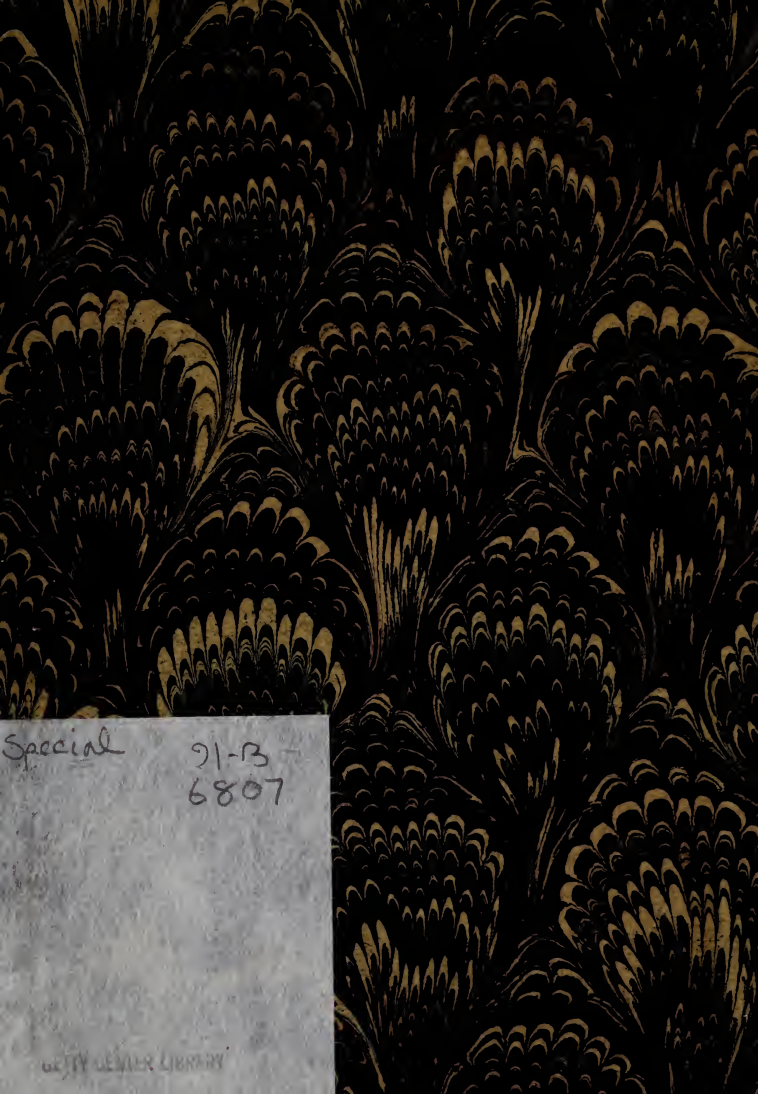
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